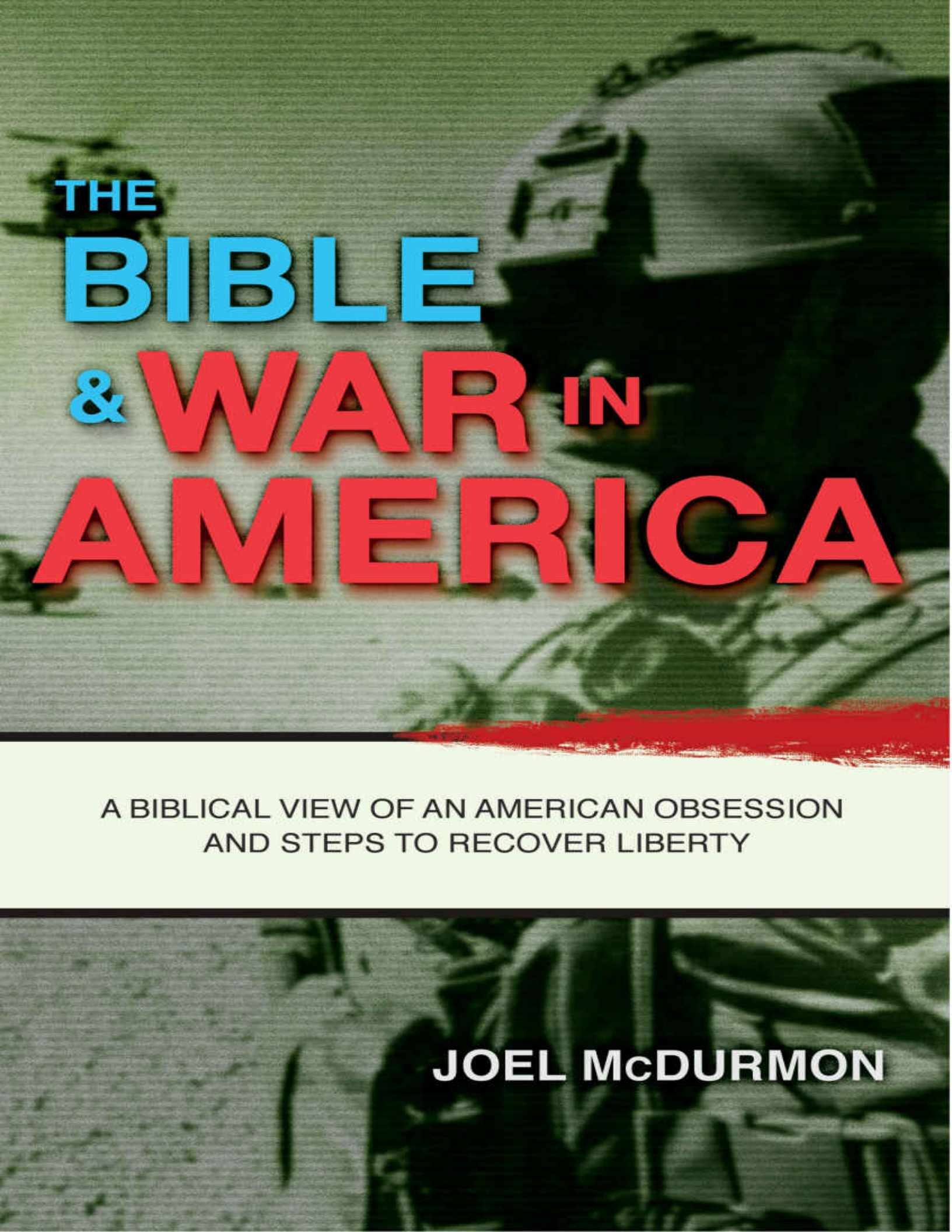

THE BIBLE & WAR IN AMERICA

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF AN AMERICAN OBSESSION
AND STEPS TO RECOVER LIBERTY

JOEL McDURMON

The Bible & *War in America*

A biblical view of an American obsession and steps to recover liberty

Joel McDurmon

American Vision, Inc.
Powder Springs, GA

The Bible & War in America:
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For

my grandpa

a peaceful farmer
who sat up at night while
his son was in Vietnam

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preface

This book is the expanded version of a chapter from my book *Restoring America One County at a Time*. In that work, I study biblical teachings of freedom and liberty through ten major topics of civic life such as education, welfare, courts, federalism, markets, taxes, banking, etc. With each topic, I explore and answer three questions: How was America once free? How was that freedom lost? And, How do we get freedom back? When I got into the chapter on national defense, I created a monster. With so many wars and so long a history of a standing army since our Constitution, that chapter took on quite a life of its own. Since this is such an important topic, it seemed a good idea to offer that expanded study as a small standalone book.

I realize there are many more questions to be answered both on the biblical front and on the historical. This is hardly a comprehensive treatise on the issue. With this book, I aim primarily to present biblical teachings that are often ignored, as well as facts and perspectives of American war history that too often suffer the same fate. In so doing, I sincerely hope to alert many Christians to the tragic darkness of war and empire, the shadows of which our city on a hill has not always outshone—but could.

Joel McDurmon
Powder Springs, Georgia
January 2012

one

a biblical view

It is time for Christians to focus on some vitally important topics in American life today: the military, war, and defense. Why do I say these topics are so vitally important, and for Christians? Because biblically and historically speaking, no tyranny can rule without military force, and when a central government has access to a standing army, then not even long traditions, faith, or well-entrenched legal systems can constrain a tyrant's whim. Many nations throughout history have risen and fallen by the fateful recompense of military lusts, and America is no exception to these forces.

Yet many Christians uncritically praise every advance of American ship and jet, hailing every missile strike with strains of "God Bless America." These same Christians have probably never read how openly and clearly the Bible forbids a nation to have a large standing army. They have probably never read the Bible's rules for raising armies and waging war. Considering the hundreds of billions of dollars of debt our wars lay upon us each year, not to mention hundreds of thousands of casualities in just the past decade, *it is time for Christians to address this issue*.

When a nation's identity grows too dependent upon military power, that power soon grows intertwined with every other branch of government and civic life: the economy, education, welfare, political power, special interests, taxation, money and banking, manufacturing and trade, courts, and of course the other Executive power functions. In turn, each of these becomes moulded and shaped, and, in some cases, grows dependent upon that large, *active*, standing army. Thus, the lust for a standing army transforms the entire character of a nation from liberty to centralized nanny-state, as we shall further see in the second part of this topic.

While to today's mind it presents a nearly radical picture, the biblical teaching on war and military are the only proper place to find foundations for "national defense in a free society." Indeed, the biblical direction is so contrary to what we have known and come to accept as normal, that were it not God's Own Word, many Americans would refuse even to tolerate hearing it for a second. But hear it we must, because change we must.

Preventing a Warfare State

That picture is found primarily in two passages of Deuteronomy: the laws for kings (Deut. 17) and the laws for warfare (Deut. 22). First, let us simply read the laws for kings, stated in Deuteronomy 17:14–20:

> When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, "I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me," you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, "You shall never return that way again." And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

While not all of these criteria explicitly refer to the military, they are still proper to review here. First, the law stipulates that rulers should be "From among your brothers . . . not a foreigner." In other words, to use a catch phrase commonly heard today, the ruler must be a "natural born

citizen." The U.S. Constitution exhibits this biblical idea, which was a response in part to the fact that King George III was not a native Brit, but of the German House of Hanover. Moreover, he had an alliance with continental banking interests, and when Parliament wished to further tax the American colonies, he remained indifferent to the Colonists he was sworn to defend. The U.S. Constitution returned to the pre-1066 Anglo-Danish standard of "kith and kin." The word "King" is related to the English "kin" which has an ethnic reference. "Kith and kin" means "same country and family." Without this quality in a leader, there cannot be any true loyalty to the people. And while this sounds like a side matter, it is not: a ruler who identifies with the people almost as a family will fight to defend them and their liberties. A ruler without that loyalty, however, will more likely be less interested in defense. It's the difference which Jesus taught between the shepherd and the hireling:

> The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. (John 10:11–13)

Notice how the issue manifests itself especially in times of *defense* and *protection*, when the hireling's own life or goods may be at risk.

The King's self-interests can pervert society in other ways as well, and the law therefore forbids him to acquire three categories of things: horses, wives, and wealth. While it may not be apparent to the modern reader immediately, these three things all relate to foreign policy, the military, and war. First, horses. In those days, horses were an *offensive* weapon with great range and quick-strike ability; they were thus a means of military conquest. To acquire many horses was to have a standing cavalry ready for an expansive empire. God did not save His people to be a large War State. Horses were the favorite tool of War States. There were other means sufficient for defense.

This also means in principle that God's people, with their King, were not allowed to have a standing army. This does not mean they could not have a well-trained, well-prepared, and ordered militia system, as we shall see; it means no permanent standing army. A standing army is a perpetual

temptation for a king to impose his will by force *somewhere*, if not abroad in imperial conquest, then in tyranny upon the people at home—or both. This is the very reason God punished David for taking a census, which was the first step in raising an army (2 Sam. 24).[1] For this sin of militarism, God plagued Israel.

The law against multiplying horses had a second part: forbidding the King from causing "the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'" This is, on its surface, a law against foreign arms exchanges, but it is much more. Two things stand out. First, the king is not to "cause" the people to do this. The Hebrew verb "return" is specifically in the *causative* form: the King shall not cause them to return—that is, he shall not *force* them to return to Egypt. This is not a literal blanket prohibition against visiting or even migrating to Egypt. Jesus did so with his parents by divine prompting (Matt. 2:13ff). Rather, this is speaking of the King forcing people into service, presumably as mercenaries or perhaps plain slaves for Egypt in exchange for horses. This is made clearer when we study the second aspect, God's command that the people "shall never return that way again."

By "that way," God is not talking about the literal road to Egypt—again, Jesus' flight to Egypt makes this understanding impossible. By "that way" God is speaking of the slavery involved in the people being forced into State servitude. How is this clear? Ironically, from something that is *un*clear: the verse clearly says that God *told* the Israelites this command: "since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'" Yet this command appears nowhere in the story of God's people up to that point—indeed, it appears nowhere else in Scripture. We have no record of any prohibition of a return to Egypt like this, let alone a literal return. While it is possible God told them this beforehand and that revelation was not recorded, it makes much more sense if understood in reference to the slavery of Egypt. For in reference to slavery to a god-State like Egypt, God *did* give His people a general prohibition. It was given to all of them clearly and loudly:

> And God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me." (Ex. 20:1–3)

This is the preamble to the Ten Commandments and the First Commandment. Here, God makes it clear that His relationship to them as their God was one of deliverance from slavery to a total State. Egypt here is equated with slavery, and God brought them out of it. He subsequently *commanded* them to have no other God but Him—the God of liberation and deliverance. In other words, the people were not to return to the way of Egypt—in the judicial sense of the word.

This understanding is further reinforced by the sanctions of Deuteronomy 27 and 28, where God detailed the blessings Israel would enjoy if she remained faithful, as well as the curses the nation would suffer should she disobey. The very last sentence of the list of curses makes the point:

> The Lord will bring you back in ships to Egypt, a journey that I promised that you should never make again; and there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer. (Deut. 28:68)

Should Israel disobey, they would be returned to the slavery of Egypt —not necessary literal Egypt (for when the nation did disobey, it was carried captive into Assyria and into Babylon) but certainly a physical bondage, even if self-imposed.

So the law against horses is, in its fullness, a law against offensive armies, standing armies, imperialism, and *conscription*—all based in God's condemnation of slavery and of salvation by conquest, by man. All of these things are manifestations of humanism and idolatry: man trusting man, man exalting man, man serving man, man being forced to serve man.

Second, the King was not allowed to have many wives. In today's culture—where we have the strange mixture of a general repugnance of polygamy in conjunction with easy divorce and growing acceptance of homosexuality among politicians and leaders—it may be difficult to comprehend why a King should be prohibited many wives. But the reason is quite simple. In the ancient days—and really right up until modern times —Kings would use marriages to seal political alliances. Thus, polygamy was often intertwined with foreign policy.

Again we have an allegiance issue, just as with the requirement that the King come from among the people. If he is married to many foreign

women, his heart is susceptible to compromise in favor of her people and against his. The same is true of multiple marriages (or women) even of his own people—there is in that case an increased competition for his heart, will, and capacities which detracts further from his ability to do his job as King. We see these problems develop in Solomon's womanizing (1 Kings 11:1–4), and his "heart was not wholly true."

Third, the King was also not allowed to have much money—that is, "excessive silver and gold." This is a prohibition against a large public treasury, and certainly against a virtually infinite public treasury like the Federal Reserve. Again, this is about loyalty: a King with independent wealth can have a divided heart as he has no need for trust or dependence upon the people. The issue, however, is more importantly about power. A large treasury has the power to make large portions of the public dependent upon the government. It can also be used to buy those war toys and standing armies and to wage wars. In fact there is a powerful connection between money, power, and war. As Cicero said, "The sinews of war are infinite money."[2] God's people were not to be a people of conquest; their King should not have the tools of conquest, including excess funds (and certainly not a central bank with fiat powers!).

The final verse of this passage tells us that the King is to make himself a personal copy of God's law, and have his copy approved by the priesthood (for accuracy at least). He must read in that law daily, and, most importantly, obey it. In all of these things we see a King who is not a self-motivated, power-hungry leader, but rather a man first and foremost submitted to God's Word. And that Word continues on to tell us exactly why that King should do so: so that he remains in the fear of God, with humility and equal station with his constituents, to preserve justice according to God's law, and to maintain peace and prosperity in the land for the long term.

The goal here is a State or civil society that is small, restricted by God's law, not equipped for offensive conquest, with no standing army and thus not tempted to wars of imperialism, expansion, colonialism, or nation building; not having a large treasury and thus not capable of acting as a Welfare State or a Warfare State. It will have a public and constant emphasis on the ruler not having his heart lifted up above the people—thus, no elitism, and no sense of government being the highest leaders of every

facet of life, for *they are not messiahs or saviors* of the people. They are there for only one purpose—civil justice according to God's Law.

Raising an army

The second relevant passage covers both the laws for raising a militia and for waging warfare, all found in Deuteronomy 20:5–20. The first part of this covers the raising of a militia, in verses 1–9:

> When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And when you draw near to the battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the people and shall say to them, "Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory." Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying, "Is there any man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. And is there any man who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed its fruit? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man enjoy its fruit. And is there any man who has betrothed a wife and has not taken her? Let him go back to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her." And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, "Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own." And when the officers have finished speaking to the people, then commanders shall be appointed at the head of the people.

There are several principles involved here. First, the militia is raised in a defensive situation. The Israelites are first confronted with the armies of their enemies before they begin this process. The principle here is that a militia is raised for the cause of repelling invaders.

Second, an army is religious in nature, for war is religious in nature: it is God's judgment on earth, as we shall see later. So the first to speak to the

assembled people (not yet an army) is a priest. The army is to be motivated by God's sanction and find their primary courage in His favorable presence. Now, the people would already know for a fact that God does not approve of offensive wars, so had they been assembled for such, this motivational prayer would have been an act of public hypocrisy. And the people—not the government or the priesthood, nor any other top-down authority—have the final right to decide this. This prayer is a final reminder to the assembled men that, ultimately, God decides the outcomes of battles, and they should consider the call before them in such light.

Third, based on this fact of God's sovereignty in the affairs of men, and building on God's prohibition of offensive wars, God leaves the final decision of joining the fight *up to the individuals themselves*. This is apparent in the militia-raising process that follows. The militia was purely voluntary: anyone who had any unfinished business (whether property, business, or family) was given multiple clear notices, and allowed to leave. Able-bodied males over 20 years old were called, and by implication were *expected* to fight in any just cause. But the exit door was broadly open for a wide scope of reasons. The civil rulers were not allowed to make exceptions for anyone, but were required by God generally to let those who chose to abstain freely leave.

And if the latitude had not been given widely enough already—land, vineyards, wives—the Law mandated that anyone who was simply *fearful* could freely leave the militia: "Is there any man who is fearful and fainthearted? *Let him go. . . .*"

These "freely leaving" measures provided several benefits to the whole scenario: In case the militia had been organized for offensive or dubious purposes—most soldiers would leave, and the campaign would likely fall apart. When given a choice, people will not fight in these conditions. Yet in the case of a legitimate cause, the Law provided every possible out for the fearful, the distracted, worrisome, or otherwise distracted soldiers to be removed from the scene. This protected both those who left—who would not have fought wholeheartedly if at all—and also the willing soldiers who would not want to have to fight beside, or rely on, those with divided loyalty or lack of courage. If the cause is just, the end result is the most willing, able, and focused army possible (Uriah's unwillingness to leave his brethren in battle even at the behest of King David is evidence of this spirit; see 2 Samuel 11:11). At this point, the militia was raised. (Consequently

also, if the cause were unjust and clearly so, there would be great difficulty on the part of the bloodthirsty, tyrannical government to raise much of a militia at all. A general lack of willingness would drive all those able bodied males readily to accept the various "outs" and leave little more than a meager force standing to serve the corrupt leaders.)

Finally, after all objectors and abstainers left, then, and only then, were commanders *appointed*. Note that the military leaders had to be appointed: for as there was no standing army, there would be no lifetime, career military men. There would, of course, probably always be veterans around, skilled in battle and administration from past wars, but these were to return to the private sector when the battle was over. Should another just cause arise, they would probably—though not necessarily—be appointed as commanders again.[3]

What is clear here is that God's society has no allowance for a standing army and none for military conscription or a draft. Indeed, a military conscription was simply another type of State slavery from which God had delivered Israel, and which He forbade their Kings to practice, as we saw above. And when Israel finally rejected God in choosing for themselves a king like other nations, military conscription was one of the curses which God said that tyrant would bring upon them (1 Sam. 8:11–12). Instead, God protected peace, freedom, and, by giving His people every chance to leave a potential militia, He left the final judgment of any particular war's justness to the individual—not the government. This is decentralization at its finest.

Contrast this with the modern American mentality in regard to the military and war. Not only have we had a draft in more than one instance, we have a tradition of ridiculing objectors, calling them cowards, traitors, and "un-American," and in some cases even passing laws against detracting from a war effort or discouraging enlistment. From just what we have seen so far, this attitude can only be judged as ungodly—and God is no pansy when it comes to issues of war and judgment in the earth. He nevertheless has a higher standard for conscience and freedom. We have more often than not gotten his standard exactly backwards: whereas He gives men every opportunity to abstain from a battle and invites those who would leave to do so, we often force everyone to fight (upon threat of civil penalties) and ridicule those who object. This is to place nationalism over godliness, and thus to make an idol of one's nation or armed forces.

The laws of waging war

The second part of this passage (Deut. 20:10–20) covers the laws of war. Intertwined in this passage are several aspects that pertain only to Israel's special situation in the land, yet since we also learn here the general principles of waging warfare, we must focus on these.

Before we can understand these rules of warfare, we have to understand their theological foundation in the laws concerning judgment of false witnesses. These appear in the previous chapter of Deuteronomy.

> A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deut. 19:15–21)

While not apparent at first, this passage has a profound connection to the rules of warfare. War is God's judgment upon whole societies and nations, and it involves the ultimate sanction of God's judgment in earth—the death penalty. For there to be a sanction of armed defense (especially to the point of killing the aggressor) lawfully applied, there must first have been an aggression that justifies it. Out of this principle comes the theory of "just war." Thus any nation that acts with deadly force is by implication saying to its target, "You have committed an offense which justifies God's judgment of the death penalty."

At this point, the laws against false witness provide a check. Just as with individuals who bring false accusations, any nation aggressing against another *without* just cause is making that implied accusation *falsely*. An unwarranted aggression is a false declaration of God's judgment, which means also that those in charge of the decision to aggress have set

themselves up as false prophets or even false gods. But God's laws against false witness in regard to the death penalty state that the bearers of such false accusations themselves should receive the penalty in question—in this case, death or subjugation.

This is, in part, the theological justification for waging war against an aggressor nation. But unlike cases involving individuals, national disputes have no higher court other than God Himself to decide the evidence in the case and then punish a false witness. National leaders must deliberate among themselves and then, if the attack is unjustified, choose to enact the sanctions against the aggressors themselves. In the end, God will determine which cause was just—and this may very well be reflected in the results on the battlefield.

Even at the point of defensive attack, however, the Bible calls leaders to offer terms of peace. They must allow for the admission of guilt on the part of the false-witness aggressor, and then allow the possibility of restitution and peaceful subjugation as opposed to bloodshed. This is a measure to advance peace over warfare. Thus we get to the passage on the laws of waging war:

> When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. And if it responds to you peaceably and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labor for you and shall serve you. But if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. . . .
>
> When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you? Only the trees that you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls. (Deut. 20:10–20)

Be clear here: the "terms of peace" proposal is in no way to let the aggressor nation off the hook. They are instead to be forced into restitution and servitude. This does not require occupation necessarily, certainly not at the level of local taskmasters—that is not the point. The point will be civil atonement for the aggression, and the punishment must fit the crime. This is

establishing a principle of war reparations to be paid by an entire generation of the aggressing nation. This is no light penalty, but it is just and is to be preferred above the waging of war for the preservation of social peace and life.

Nevertheless, if the aggressor refuses the terms—which would be to persist in declaring the validity of its false judgment—then war and bloodshed are justified, and should indeed be carried out as a matter of cosmic justice. But note, by looking at the big picture here, war and bloodshed are acceptable only in defense, and only as a last resort.

The laws pertaining to trees here sound obscure and perhaps obsolete, but just the opposite is true: they have both fundamental theological significance and modern practical relevance. The theological significance lies in the significance fruit-bearing trees have for life (stemming all the way back to the Garden). Biblical economist Gary North addresses this issue with powerful insight:

> This law of warfare reminded man that fruit-bearing trees sustain man's life. For this reason, they must not be used to impose man's death. . . .
>
> This law makes it clear that holy warfare is not just a means of inflicting death and destruction. It is a means of extending life. *Holy warfare is not destruction for destruction's sake.* It is destruction for God's sake. There is an element of disinheritance in war, but it is always to be offset by an element of inheritance.[4]

The passage goes on to say that the Israelites could cut down non-fruit-bearing trees to make siegeworks—implements for battle in the days of walled cities. But these days ended with the invention of gunpowder and its application in the West in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the fruit trees must remain alive. The Israelites could eat the fruit, but must preserve the fruit-bearers.[5]

Both aspects of this law have modern applications. The destruction of-non fruit trees is still allowed, and has benefits in some conditions of war. Defoliants in jungle warfare are certainly allowable where necessary.[6] Nevertheless, fruit trees are not to be cut to make war implements, certainly, but the theological principle of "that which sustains man's life" has much broader modern applications than the narrow instances in which fruit trees

could somehow serve as modern weaponry. The principle means also that *crops* must be preserved during times of war, as well as water sources and systems, livestock, beehives, and other sources of food and health. The doctrines of total warfare and the "scorched earth" policy run completely counter to God's law here. Deaths of innocent civilians, "collateral damage," and destruction of private property in general should be condemned. Medical centers and pharmaceutical plants should remain protected. So should most factories and businesses—for these centers of economic production pertain directly to the sustenance of life for many people. Those factories directly involved in any war efforts, however, thereby include themselves in the hostilities, and therefore give up the protections afforded civilian life.

Biblical ideals in America

So we have seen the basic biblical ideals for the state in regard to the military, the raising of a militia, and the waging of war. The reader will realize that we are a long way from these ideals today. But that has not always been the case in American history. We were once closer to the biblical doctrines.

In fact, in early colonial times, we were much closer. British citizens, especially those involved in business, disparaged war, and wanted a separation of party politics and commerce. For the hundred years from 1660 to 1760, the eminent historian Charles Andrews tells us,

> Most, though by no means all, of the mercantilists—merchants, tradesmen, and manufacturers as well as pamphleteers—hated war and the diplomacy that led to war, as interfering with the prosperity of the nation, and they resented the influence of party politics in determining any governmental programme that affected trade.[7]

Those that defected from this view, Andrews adds, were a group who wanted war with Spain as a license to raid Spanish plate fleets for gold bullion. These were essentially would-be pirates who did not succeed in their desires.[8]

Daniel Defoe, the famous author of *Robinson Crusoe*, wrote in favor of free commerce in 1713:

> What has trade to do with your political quarrels, and what business have party men with the commerce of the nation? Trade is neither Whig nor Tory, Church or Dissenter, High Church or Low Church. If parties come to govern our trade, all our commerce will be at an end.[9]

Another pamphleteer, under the name "Thomas Merchant, Esq.," wrote of "Peace and Trade, War and Taxes or the Irreparable Damage of New Trade in Case of War."[10] This desire to separate political power and commerce helps preserve the biblical injunction to deprive the king of a large treasury, which applies to Parliaments as well. As soon as parties realize they can keep themselves in power by promising handouts or advantages to special interests, then corruption takes over and incentives for war mount. Thus, they should not be allowed any recourse that affects trade pro or con. The biblical mindset was prevalent, even if primarily originating on the British side, in colonial America.

The same was true in regard to voluntarism in the militia. The 1641 Massachusetts Body of Liberties was the first legal code established in the Colonies and was written by a Puritan minister. It outlawed military conscription:

> 7. No man shall be compelled to go out of the limits of this plantation upon any offensive wars which this Commonwealth or any of our friends or confederates shall voluntarily undertake. . . .

This continued for forty-five years until it was disregarded by Charles II and again by James II. Nevertheless, colonists were not regularly compelled to fight for Britain, even in their own colonies. In cases where local militia aided British "regulars," they were referred to as a secondary class, "provincials." Yet these "provincial" militias were enough of a threat that the first thing the British tried to do at the outset of the American Revolution was disarm them. Indeed, it was Britain's planned raid on their respective armories that led to the battles of Lexington and Concord.

During the American Revolution, recruitment still had a voluntary element. In one example, the famous Lutheran minister and friend of George Washington, John Muhlenberg, gave a rousing sermon on the "time for war." At the end, he disrobed to reveal his own full military regalia and encouraged men to enlist. He signed up three hundred on the spot. This was

the common view up to the time: American military was by recruitment of a militia in response to a just cause. Thus, a military historian reminds us, "Standing armies are a relatively recent institution in the history of warfare."[11]

Many of the American Framers, having learned of and observed the militaristic imperialism of Europe, lauded individual arms and opposed standing armies on principle. Thus, in *Federalist* 46, Madison lauded

> the advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over the people of all other countries. . . . Notwithstanding the military establishments in the several kingdoms of Europe, which are carried as far as the public resources will bear, the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms.[12]

During the constitutional ratification convention in Virginia, George Mason recalled how Britain aimed "to disarm the people—that was the best and most effective way to enslave them." This statement came on suspicion of the standing army which was proposed in the Constitution; he feared it would replace or overpower the State militias. The nationalists' response, which was supposed to alleviate this fear, could only do so by presupposing that State militias and private gun ownership would remain the status quo and would be enough to deter a takeover by the national army. Noah Webster argued,

> Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed as they are in almost every kingdom in Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by the sword, because the whole body of the people are armed, and constitute a force superior to any band of regular troops that can be, on any pretense, raised in the United States.[13]

The British politician and reformer, James Burgh, whose work was very popular in the colonies (and influenced Jefferson), wrote in his *Political Disquisitions* (1774),

> Those, who have the command of the arms in a country, says Aristotle, are masters of the state, and have it in their power to make what

> revolutions they please. . . . there is no end to observations on the difference between the measures likely to be pursued by a minister backed by a standing army, and those of a court awed by the fear of an armed people. . . No kingdom can be secured otherwise than by arming the people. The possession of arms is the distinction between a freeman and a slave. . . .

Even Alexander Hamilton, besieged by anti-federalist complaints about a standing army under the proposed Constitution, proposed in *Federalist* 29 a militia training program and individual possession of arms:

> If circumstances should at any time oblige the [national] government to form an army of any magnitude, that army can never be formidable to the liberties of the people while there is a large body of citizens, little, if at all, inferior to them in discipline and the use of arms, who stand ready to defend their own rights and those of their fellow-citizens. This appears to me the only substitute that can be devised for a standing army, and the best possible security against it, if it should exist.

Unfortunately, as I explore further in *Restoring America*, Hamilton neither truly believed this nor intended to practice it once he and his nationalists got their way. The anti-federalists remained closer to the older colonial view and greatly feared a standing army. We have already heard Mason in Virginia. Brutus in New York also held this view and would also not fall for the nationalist/federalist response. He warned that the standing army was already planned by many of the nationalists and would become inevitable should the Constitution pass:

> The idea that there is no danger of the establishment of a standing army, under the new constitution, is without foundation.
>
> It is a well known fact, that a number of those who had an agency in producing this system, and many of those who it is probable will have a principal share in the administration of the government under it, if it is adopted, are avowedly in favor of standing armies. It is language common among them, “That no people can be kept in order, unless the government have an army to awe them into obedience; it is necessary

> to support the dignity of the government, to have a military establishment." And there will not be wanting a variety of plausible reasons to justify the raising of one, drawn from the danger we are in from the Indians on our frontier, or from the European provinces in our neighborhood. If to this we add, that an army will afford a decent support, and agreeable employment to the young men of many families, who are too indolent to follow occupations that will require care and industry, and too poor to live without doing any business, we can have little doubt, but that we will have a large standing army, as soon as the government can find money to pay them, and perhaps sooner.[14]

"Centinel" (probably Judge George Bryan or his son, Samuel, of Philadelphia) feared the broad military power given to Congress. Speaking of Article 1, Section 8 of the proposed Constitution, he wrote,

> This section will subject the citizens of these States to the most arbitrary military discipline, even death may be inflicted upon the disobedient; in the character of a [national] militia, you may be dragged from your families and homes to any part of the continent, and for any length of time, at the discretion of a future Congress: and as a militia, you may be made the unwilling instruments of oppression, under the direction of government; there is no exemption upon account of conscientious scruples of bearing arms; no equivalent to be received in lieu of personal services. The militia of Pennsylvania may be marched to Georgia or New Hampshire, however incompatible with their interests or consciences;—in short, they may be made as mere machines as Prussian soldiers.[15]

The State of Pennsylvania—being populated largely by Quakers and other conscientious objectors to war—saw the same concerns addressed in a report of the Minority's "Dissent" to its Convention. Along with several other changes to the proposed constitution, the Minority proposed that "as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not be kept up."[16] The "Dissent" also warned that a standing army may be used to enforce the collection of taxes, and to enforce any laws it creates from which even the majority of people dissent.[17] This would be "inconsistent

with every idea of liberty." The report warned, "For the same force that may be employed to compel obedience to good laws, might and probably would be used to wrest from the people their constitutional liberties."[18] The Minority certainly did not trust the Convention:

> The framers of this constitution appear to have been aware of this great deficiency; to have been sensible that no dependence could be placed on the people for their support: but on the contrary, that the government must be executed by force. They have therefore made a provision for this purpose in a permanent STANDING ARMY, and a MILITIA that may be subjected to as strict discipline and government.[19]

Luther Martin, who had been a delegate, addressed the Maryland Assembly in regard to the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention: "It was further observed, that when a government *wishes* to deprive their citizens of freedom, and reduce them to slavery, it *generally makes use of a standing army* for that purpose, and *leaves the militia in a situation as contemptible as possible, least they might oppose its arbitrary designs*."[20] Nevertheless, he continues to reveal, this concern and many like it were steamrolled by a single majority vote on the floor.

"John DeWitt" of Boston saw the constitutional grant of power for a standing national army as the beginning of the subversion of State militias, and all defenses of that power were but a cover for the greater plan of centralization. But it started as an apparently *small* grant of power, for "They are aware of the necessity of catching Samson asleep to trim him of his locks." He added,

> It is asserted by the most respectable writers on Government, that a well regulated militia, composed of the yeomanry of the country have ever been considered the bulwark of a free people; and, says the celebrated Mr. Hume, "without it, it is folly to think any free government will have stability and security. . . ." It is universally agreed, that a militia and a standing body of troops never flourished on the same soil. Tyrants have uniformly depended upon the latter at the expense of the former. . . . No, my fellow-citizens, this plainly shews they do not mean to depend upon the citizens of the States alone to

> enforce their powers, wherefore it is their policy to neglect them, and lean upon something more substantial and summary.[21]

The principle that the militia should be decentralized, local, and composed of "yeomanry of the country" parallels the biblical ideal that rulers should be from among their own people. If they are not, they have less interest in the land and the people they are supposed to defend. "The Federal Farmer" recognized this problem, and thus warned "that all regulations tending to render this general militia useless and defenceless, by establishing select corps of militia, or distinct bodies of military men [both instances of a central army], *not having permanent interests and attachments in the community* [are] to be avoided."[22] In a much earlier essay, the same writer expressed—as did many of the writers on both sides—that the Constitution would lead eventually to a civil war. The Federal Farmer argued this could happen in two ways, and a national, central army would be the key factor in one of them. He wrote,

> No position can be truer than this, that in this country either neglected laws or a military execution of them, must lead to a revolution, and to the destruction of freedom. Neglected laws must first lead to anarchy and confusion; and a military execution of laws is only a shorter way to the same point—despotic government.[23]

We could follow with yet further quotations showing a general fear and suspicion of standing armies and centralized armies in the United States, or the Colonies, before the Constitution. Indeed, the Declaration of Independence itself states that one of the colonists' grievances against George III was that "he has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures." This was one of the very reasons America declared independence to begin with!

Nevertheless, despite the few dozen grievances listed, the colonists followed the biblical principle of making war a last resort, making numerous appeals for peaceful redress to both the King and the British people:

> In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered

only by repeated injury. . . .

> Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

This principle and the discipline to apply it exhibit strongly the Reformed Christian heritage—so much of which the early Puritans brought with them to this land. John Calvin himself had urged the use of war only as a last resort: if Kings

> must arm themselves against the enemy, that is, the armed robber, let them not lightly seek occasion to do so; indeed, let them not accept the occasion when offered, unless they are driven to it by extreme necessity. For . . . surely everything else ought to be tried before recourse is had to arms.[24]

Calvin's colleague Pierre Viret was even more tenacious on the subject. He called war a "sickness" and said "there is nothing which Christians should be more wary to employ nor which is less suited to their profession."[25] Distinguished Professor Robert D. Linder notes how Viret "denounced those who made their living manufacturing military equipment and munitions," for it was pursued in view of profit via the shedding of blood.[26] The resulting military-industrial complex, he argued in so many words, then had an interest in creating and sustaining more and more wars: it magnified the differences between peoples so that "hateful, ambitious, greedy people who hoped to profit from the war" increased their chances of starting one. Viret considered the wars of religion as largely products of such avaricious greed.[27] While he believed in a doctrine of just war, he also

thought it should be used only as an absolute last resort, for even just wars have unwelcome consequences.

These beliefs are, of course, merely extensions of the previously quoted laws of kings and laws of warfare taken from Scripture. There were to be no standing armies and no large treasury from which the king could draw to fund a war. Every measure was to be taken to avoid war when necessary.

These theological principles held by the early American colonies helped them retain much of this spirit of peace and reasonableness. While the colonies certainly did not develop a fully biblical view of the military and war, they were far closer to one than America is today. But those principles were compromised as early as the Constitution, making even some of the grievances of the Declaration—just eleven years prior—appear hypocritical to many of our ancestors. In the years that followed—the Civil War, and the subsequent Progressive Era of empire for starters—those early principles were more and more abused. In the next section, we will more closely examine how these ideals of freedom were further compromised and eventually lost.

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1. Compare Numbers 1:1–3 where numbering the people was in reference to those able to go forth to war. The book of Numbers is the account of God's holy army in its first days in the holy land.
2. Quoted in John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), v.
3. In such a free society, there would probably also exist *private* institutions providing combat training and skills during peacetime, thus keeping military skills and knowledge in the land sharp during peacetime, yet unavailable as a political resource.
4. Gary North, *Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 4 vols. (Harrisonburg, VA: Dominion Education Ministries, Inc., 2003), 759.
5. Gary North goes on to discuss several implications of this law in Israel's context.
6. See North, 769.
7. Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: England's Commercial and Colonial Policy,* Volume 4 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 321–322.
8. Andrews, 321n1.
9. Quoted in Andrews, 322.
10. Andrews, 322n1.
11. Mark Mayo Boatner III, "Militia in the American Revolution," *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (New York: David McKay Company, 1966), 705.
12. Quoted in Lawrence D. Pratt, "Tools of Biblical Resistance," in *Tactics of Christian Resistance*, ed. by Gary North (Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983), 441–442. This quotation, and others below, are found in *The Right to Keep and Bear Arms: Report of the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary in the United States Senate,* Ninety-Seventh Congress, Second Session (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), unpaginated.
13. Quoted in Pratt, 441.

14. Quoted in *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, ed. Herbert J. Storing (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 2:410–411; minor grammatical edits added for readability.
15. In Storing, 2:160–161.
16. In Storing, 3:151.
17. In Storing, 3:162, 163–164.
18. In Storing, 3:163–164.
19. In Storing, 3:164.
20. In Storing, 2:59.
21. In Storing, 4:36–37.
22. In Storing, 2:341; emphasis added.
23. In Storing, 2:234.
24. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.12 (Battles' translation).
25. Quoted in Robert D. Linder, "Pierre Viret: A Christian View of War," *Faith for All of Life*, March/April 2011: 9, 10.
26. Linder, 10.
27. Linder, 10.

two

bombs away

Political scientist, international diplomat, and Council on Foreign Relations member John Stoessinger studied nearly every major conflict of the past century. His research covered WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Indo-Pakistani Wars (there were three major episodes: 1947, 1965, 1971), and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts (again multiple—1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and continuing today), Iraq-Iran, Iraq-Kuwait, Bosnia-Croatia, Afghanistan, and more. His conclusions are notable:

First, "no nation that began a major war in this century emerged a winner."[1]

Second, the advent of the nuclear age now means full national war would be suicide for both sides. Thus, most modern wars are carried out by small countries as proxies for larger players. This means there can be no end to such wars, and no such thing as a decisive victory.

Third, the crucial factor in the start of these wars was almost always the powerful personality of a charismatic leader (driven by personal ambition, ego, or ideology), as well as that leader's ability to maintain a following for war through a political machine.

Fourth, the most crucial factor in causes of war is *misperception*. This includes,

1. A leader's image of himself (for example, if he confidently expects victory after a brief triumphant campaign)
2. A leader's view of his adversary's character (racism, ethnicism, ideology, etc.)

3. A leader's view of an adversary's intentions toward himself (thus leading to pre-emptive war or self-fulfilling prophecy, regardless of the accuracy of the assumption)
4. A leader's view of an adversary's capabilities and power (this devolves into a dispute over measuring another nation's power based on criteria that may or may not be reliable)[2]

Each of these observations must be seen for what they truly represent: direct violations of the laws for kings in Deuteronomy 17 and the laws of war in Deuteronomy 20:

1. The lust to have a central ruling figure to begin with—a "king" or ruling personality as a centralizing force
2. Multiplying offensive arms
3. Foreign entanglements and arms races with other nations[3]
4. Committing the people to the tyranny of perpetual warfare, including innocent local populations being used as battlegrounds for larger nations, including total war if necessary, or at least accepting "collateral damage"
5. Fearing the armies of man based on their apparent power

And for all of this, God has punished every major aggressor in the century—not a single one has emerged a winner. But these sins are hardly exclusive to the most recent century. In America, freedom in the military was lost much earlier.

The *real* first world war

The destruction of the early Puritan-American views of the military, and of biblical, voluntary militias, etc., as described above, began in this country with the first skirmish of the first world war—not World War I, mind you, but what was perhaps the first truly world war. Here's the story:

In the 1750s, the French began to solidify and fortify their claims along the rivers of what is today western Pennsylvania. Some Virginians viewed this, rightly, as a competitive threat to their markets for trade with

Indians, but especially for real estate. Chief among the motivated was the Ohio Company of Virginia, a massive land speculation group subsidized by government land grants in the area. The acting governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, was given shares in order to keep him interested. With orders from the crown to prevent French *encroachments* upon British territory, by force if necessary, Dinwiddie nevertheless could not fund a large enough force to be a menace. So, he bought time with an emissary to advise the French to "desist."[4]

The emissary he chose was a lanky, 21-year-old army officer, early heir of a decent estate, connected to the Ohio company, who out of a lust for military fame (just as we saw earlier with Hamilton and others) jumped at the chance to go. With the seasoned Iroquois leader Tanaghrisson as a tracker and guide, the young man led a tiny troop westward into the woods. Unskilled in French or diplomacy, and untested in battle, he was unaware of what he would soon set in motion.

Meanwhile, the French, upon hearing of the coming British emissary, decided the most prudent course would be to send their own to meet him. Out went Joseph de Jumonville along with thirty-five men. Word soon made it to the British troop that it was being scouted. Tanaghrisson quickly located the French and led his friends to their encampment. But they got too close.

Upon being discovered, the officer commanded his company to fire on the French. Once they realized they were surrounded with no avenue for retreat, the French asked for quarter. Jumonville, wounded, presented his diplomatic letter; the British officer accepted, walked a few paces, and began reading. Then to everyone's shock, Tanaghrisson approached the wounded Jumonville and said, "You are not yet dead, my father"; he hacked the Frenchman's skull several times with his hatchet, and literally washed his hands in the brain matter.[5] It was an Iroquois blood-atonement ceremony: Tanaghrisson had been holding a personal vendetta against the French, and he used Dinwiddie's troop to put him in a position to accomplish the murderous rite.

The kill would have much larger consequences. Upon hearing of their defeat, the French prepared a larger detachment headed by Jumonville's half-brother who was eager for revenge. A month later, they cornered the British troops in a makeshift fort at Great Meadow. Everything went wrong for the British: their Indian allies left them and, in fact, switched sides; their

provisions were meager; many of their animals died; they were outnumbered, and their enemy had an advantageous position in the woods nearby; it began pouring rain, rendering the exposed British muskets useless, whereas the woods provided the French dry enough shelter to fire volleys for some time; worse yet, the demoralized British fighters at last broke into a large stock of the only supply they still had left—rum. In no time, they were outgunned, soaked, beaten physically and morally, and half of them were drunk.

At eight-o-clock that night, a call rang out for the negotiation that no one knew would change the course of history. The French offered generous terms of surrender if the British would abandon Ohio territory for the space of a year. The British emissary's friend and translator returned that night with a copy of the terms, and the two struggled to read the rain-soaked document, written in French, by candlelight. For some reason, apparently, they did not realize that the document described the death of Jumonville a month earlier as not merely a kill, but an "assassination." By signing that document, as he did a few minutes before midnight on July 3, 1754, that 21-year-old *George Washington* officially declared the British crown responsible for an act of war against France. The next morning—a not-so-happy Fourth of July—the beaten British began their journey back to Virginia with the news.

It was the beginning of the Seven Years' War—the "French and Indian War"—which would spread throughout the world, sucking in Prussia, Austria, parts of the left-over Holy Roman Empire, Sweden, Russia, the Netherlands, Spain, India, the Caribbean, the Philippines, and more. It was truly the first *world war*, and it was truly sparked by Washington's ambling into the frontier seeking glory as a military agent for the British public-private partnership, the Ohio company. That war would lead to the compilation of such massive debt on the part of the British that the crown began looking throughout its Empire for new sources of revenue. When it was realized in the 1760s that the American colonies were the least taxed by far, a wave of tariffs and other measures were instituted. These led to revolts like the Boston Tea Party, and eventually the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolution, and thus, of course, America's own war debts, and then the problems with Hamilton and the central banks, etc. In short: no Jumonville, no War, no debt, no centralized government in America.

Now that may sound like a stretch to many readers. And indeed, we must not be so reductionistic as to cite Jumonville's death as *the* cause of the American Revolution, and certainly not all of our tyrannical woes today; but were it not for the lust for war-fame—a kid itching for a fight in order to make a name for himself—things would have been much different, and very likely much more peaceful. Even the definitive historian on the subject thinks so: "Without the Seven Years' War, American independence would surely have been long delayed, and achieved (if at all) *without a war* of national liberation."[6] Indeed, it was not only America:

> It would be difficult to imagine the French Revolution occurring as it did, when it did—or, for that matter, the Wars of Napoléon, Latin America's first independence movements, the transcontinental juggernaut that Americans call "westward expansion," and the hegemony of English-derived institutions and the English language north of the Rio Grande.[7]

All of this can be laid, at least in part, on the use of military force to gain advantage in speculative markets—to enrich a big corporation and its interested shareholders in high government positions. And young Washington strode right into the midst of this practice, with his brothers Lawrence and Augustine on the corporate side, and he on the military.

Carryover to the Constitution

It was this same Washington who would later team with Hamilton in the call for a strong national military-industrial complex, as we have seen, built on the back of brand-new Constitutional powers for a *standing army*. But there was still a significant faction, a majority in fact, that expected traditional freedoms. As we have seen, the battle over the Constitution produced numerous responses on this issue. The epitome of that opposition was inscribed by Benjamin Workman, a math professor in Philadelphia, writing under the name "Philadelphiensis":

> My fellow citizens, the present time will probably form a new epoch in the annals of America: This important, this awful crisis, bids fair to be the theme of our posterity for many generations. We are now publicly

summoned to determine whether we and our children are to be *freemen* or *slaves;* whether liberty, which we have so recently purchased with the blood of thousands of our fellow countrymen, is to terminate in blessing or curse.

In regard to religious liberty, the cruelty of the new government will probably be felt sooner in Pennsylvania than in any other state in the union. The number of religious denominations in this state, who are principled against *fighting* or *bearing arms*, will be greatly distressed indeed. In the new constitution there is no declaration in their favor; but on the contrary, the Congress and President are to have an absolute power over the *standing army, navy,* and *militia;* and the President, or rather *Emperor*, is to be the commander in chief. Now, I think, that it will appear plain that no exemption whatever from militia duty shall be allowed to any set of men, however conscientiously scrupulous they may be against *bearing arms*. Indeed from the nature of the qualifications of the president, we may justly infer, that such an idea is altogether preposterous: He is by profession a *military man*, and possibly an old soldier: Now such a man, from his natural temper, necessarily despises those who have a conscientious aversion to a military profession, which is probably the very thing in which he principally piques himself.[8]

So many State delegates so greatly feared the military powers surrendered in the Constitution that the appeasement measures for the anti-federalists—the Bill of Rights!—specifically addressed the issue. Not many people realize that the Second Amendment—so revered by conservatives—had roots in the repeated warnings against the dangers of a standing army. The Congressional discussions of this amendment reveal that the original intent of the right to bear arms was as a potential defense against our own federal government. It was meant specifically to alleviate the historical threat which the Constitution had just enshrined as a federal power.

While the final form of that Amendment may not be explicit enough for us to see it, the Congressional debate makes it clear. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts introduced it:

This declaration of rights, I take it, is intended to secure the people against the mal-administration of the Government; if we could suppose

> that, in all cases, the rights of the people would be attended to, the occasion for guards of this kind would be removed. . . .
>
> What, sir, is the use of a militia? It is to prevent the establishment of a standing army, the bane of liberty. . . . Whenever Governments mean to invade the rights of people, they always attempt to destroy the militia, in order to raise an army on their ruins. This was actually done by Great Britain at the commencement of the late revolution. They used every means in their power to prevent the establishment of an effective militia to the eastward.[9]

Later in the discussion, Mr. Gerry moved to change the language so that a standing army could not even be considered as "a secondary" security to the militias. Aedanus Burke of South Carolina preferred to be more explicit. He proposed an Amendment which added,

> A standing army of regular troops in time of peace is dangerous to public liberty, and such shall not be raised or kept up in time of peace but from necessity, and for the security of the people, nor then without the consent of two-thirds of the members present of both Houses; and in all cases the military shall be subordinate to civil authority.[10]

Thus it is clear that the Second Amendment was intimately related to the standing army powers delegated to the central government by the Constitution itself.

This view was maintained for several years afterward. St. George Tucker, a prominent professor of law at the College of William and Mary, and later a federal District Court Judge, assumed the same connection between the individual's right to bear arms and the threat of a standing army. In his 1803 edition of *Blackstone's Commentaries*, he called our Second Amendment the "true palladium of liberty," for,

> Wherever standing armies are kept up, and the right of people to keep and bear arms is, under any colour or pretext whatsoever, prohibited, liberty, if not already annihilated, is on the brink of destruction.[11]

A tale of two rebellions

In regard to original intent, a mere Amendment would not be enough to withstand the military powers its larger brother, the Constitution itself, gave to the new central government. This problem is best illustrated with a tale of two rebellions—one taking place prior to, and the other after, the constitutional settlement. In the first, the lack of central military powers ultimately left the decision to form a militia up to the people of the State. In the second, the national government used its coercive power to raise an army of 13,000 to squash a revolt.

The first is the oft-maligned Shays' rebellion. Granted, there were revolutionary undertones within parts of the Shays' movement, and likely more than undertones among a few of the rebels; but the rebellion has largely been understood only according to the propaganda of its enemies. That is, until fairly recently: Leonard Richards's work *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle*.[12] The story commonly runs that western Massachusetts farmers were heavily indebted to eastern banks. When time came to collect those debts and the farmers could not pay, they revolted in a quasi-class-war against private property. George Washington's friend, former general Henry Knox, warned him at the time of a proto-communistic uprising:

> They feel at once their own property compared with the opulent, and their own force, and they are determined to make use of the latter in order to remedy the former. Their creed is that the property of the United States has been protected from the confiscations of Britain by the joint exertions of all, and therefore ought to be the common property of all. . . .[13]

This is how the story was told to George Washington, and how it has been told pretty much ever since. But Knox was primarily motivated by a desire for a stronger union, and he knew he had to get Washington on board for any such venture. Thus, he stretched as far as he could, and what he didn't say is as important as what he did. Here's the rest of the story (in a nutshell):

Like other states, Massachusetts had helped fund the American Revolution with that wretched excuse for money, colonial scrip. It was so overinflated after the war that it was sold on the speculators' market for fractions of a penny on the dollar. This money virtually died—but it was

only mostly dead. Many of those western farmers, and especially former soldiers who were paid almost exclusively with the paper, suffered through the inflation and couldn't get rid of the worthless money fast enough. But a cabal of Boston speculators and other investors sat holding the paper just hoping it would recover—in the case of the speculators, for a handsome profit, and in the case of the more conservative establishment bankers, to save themselves from massive losses.

The cabal then made its move. No doubt better connected in the State Assembly than the frontier farmers, the investors got a *law* passed that the worthless scrip would be redeemable at *face value* and worse yet, all interest retroactively paid in silver. It was a rigged market if ever one was. But it didn't stop there. To pay of these now massively, artificially, over-valued investments, the Assembly raised taxes, the vast majority of which would fall on the common people including the western farmers. It was nothing short of a bailout for the failed Boston investors; worse yet, it double-punished the farmers who first were forced to use the money in its devalued state, and now forced to pay it off at face value to the very people who forced them to suffer through its demise.

It was even worse yet. The taxes got passed only because the Senate rammed in a self-interested governor. The former governor John Hancock sympathized with the soldiers especially and had refused to enforce collection of taxes for some time. He was very popular. But an illness forced him from running again in 1785. The new governor—himself a holder of over £3,000 in the debased notes, ready to make a killing on the enforcement of the new taxes—immediately began enforcement not only of the taxes, but of all past taxes as well. This was more than many of the country people were able to pay or willing to tolerate. It is understandable, therefore, why a revolt broke out: a *tax revolt*, not a proto-communist movement.

But more to the point is the reaction to the organized revolts led by former Revolutionary War captain Daniel Shays, after whom the "rebellion" was named. When the governor tried to raise a militia from the State's ranks, it failed miserably. The State petitioned Congress; it's sympathizers in Congress even lied saying they needed help with an Indian war. Congress pledged 1,320 troops, but Massachusetts had to raise half. Congress could convince only one hundred of its soldiers to go. Back in Boston there was decent response, but the western counties largely ignored the governor. Out

of over six hundred war veterans, only twenty-three showed up. Gary North relates,

> Baron von Steuben, who had served under Washington, identified the problem in an article signed "Belisarius." Massachusetts had 92,000 militiamen on its rolls. Why did the state need military support from Congress? He provided the correct answer: the government was not representative of the opinions of the people.[14]

A group of Boston merchants then paid former Generals Benjamin Lincoln and William Shepherd to get involved and they were able eventually to raise a combined 4,000 men, mainly from the cities Boston and Springfield. Shepherd beat Shays to the Springfield armory and illegally—that is, against orders and without the required Congressional approval—raided the armory and awaited the approaching Shays' forces. When they approached, Shepherd fired "warning shots" that killed four men and wounded twenty. This began the decline of the resistance which was over within a month.

Whatever may be said of either side in these skirmishes, the central fact to take away is how difficult it was to raise an army for a corrupt cause prior to the Constitution. Granted, the corrupt forces still eventually won out, but even this was a function of powerful centralized controls: first the imposition of colonial fiat paper, then the bailout laws for the banks and speculators, and the centralizing of the whole State's legal system largely under the power of the Bostonians. Even here, out of 92,000 enrolled militiamen, only a tiny fraction was willing to support the cause.

And the corruption did not stop with the Bostonian bailout and its mercenary militia, it continued in Knox's leveraging of the crisis to convince Washington into the Constitutional Convention. Knox wrote,

> What is to give us security against the violence of lawless men? Our government must be braced, changed, or altered to secure our lives and property. . . .
>
> The men of property and the men of station and principle there are determined to endeavor to establish and protect them in their lawful pursuits; and, what will be efficient in all cases of internal commotions

> or foreign invasions, they mean that liberty shall form the basis,—liberty resulting from an equal and firm administration of law.
>
> They wish for a *general government of unity*, as they see that the *local legislatures must naturally and necessarily tend to the general government*.[15]

Urged on by others as well—not to mention by his own predilections for stronger central government—Washington bit. You know the rest of the story: we got that "government of general unity," along with its new military powers, including a standing army and central control over state militias.

In light of this new government, we now move to the second rebellion in this tale of two: the Whiskey Rebellion of 1792. The situation was very much similar to Shays': the government (national now as opposed to state) had now centralized all the war debts from the Revolution, and Hamilton was seeking new sources of revenue to pay them off. He studied how he could best raise taxes while angering the fewest people. His answer was what we today would call a "sin tax"—a tax on all distilled spirits. Madison agreed surprisingly quickly, and the two rammed the bill through Congress. But not everyone accepted it as wise. Senator William McClay of Pennsylvania, (not to be confused with the later Congressman of the same name from the same State) wrote a startlingly accurate prophecy in his journal: "War and bloodshed are the most likely consequence of this."[16]

Within a few months of the bill taking effect, reports of revolt were reaching Washington. Tax collectors were shunned and threatened. By the following summer, some collectors and other agents had been tarred and feathered, some beaten and whipped. Opposition spread, especially west of Appalachia, and in nearly every State. Some States refused to enforce the tax at all, and in conjunction with other concerns, groups of Georgians and Kentuckians were forming secession movements.

Instead of rescinding or even reconsidering the tyrannical tax, the administration planned stiff coercion. Hamilton—eager as always to impose his will by force—immediately called for a swift and harsh military solution. Washington welcomed whatever was necessary to suppress the revolts, as long, he said, as the solution was constitutional. Before all-out military suppression could take place, however, the administration needed at least two things: it needed to appear to the public as having attempted a

peaceful solution, and it needed to expand its militia-raising powers so that it could *draft* soldiers by compulsion.

The draft powers came with the two Militia Acts of 1792. Whereas the Constitution had already centralized military powers, it generally left the power to *call up* the militia within the powers of Congress, and then it was only a call, not compulsion. The first Militia Act of 1792 remedied the first problem, delegating power to the President to call up the militia to repel invasions, etc. This was ostensibly in response to Indian Wars in the Northwest Territory, but the statute included language directly applicable to the tax revolts of late: the President could call up the militia "whenever the laws of the United States shall be opposed or the execution thereof obstructed, in any state, by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings." The second Militia Act ensured that such a call would be answered; by decree, it conscripted every able-bodied male between 18 and 45 years of age (Congressmen and Senators, however, were conveniently excepted) into their respective state militias, ready to be called up, and provided some unifying structure throughout. (And with great irony, this conscription—which as we have seen before is a form of slavery—applied to "each and every *free* able-bodied white male citizen.")

Within months, Hamilton began drafting a proclamation to be made by Washington condemning the revolts in western Pennsylvania. Made a national broadside on September 15, 1792, the proclamation condemned the tax revolts as "contrary to the duty that every citizen owes to his country." Ignoring the obvious imposition of the tax itself, the letter praised "the moderation which has been heretofore shewn on the part of the government," and promised every "necessary step" would be taken and "all lawful ways and means will be strictly put in execution" to enforce collection of the taxes. Hamilton was already ready for the military option, but the time was not quite ripe for it.

Hamilton eventually ramped up a campaign of propaganda and outright deception to move the nation toward his goal. During this window, from 1792 to 1794, Hamilton engaged in a general attack on his political opposition by claiming they were agents of the French Revolution, atheism, and anarchy—all of which accusations were false. His response to the whisky rebellion fits perfectly into this mould. And with the multiple efforts at secession and refusal to pay the tax, and now the Militia Acts in place,

Hamilton sensed a perfect "opportunity for successful assertion of federal dominance."[17] His campaign deceptively portrayed the rebellion as uniquely located in a few western Pennsylvania counties—though he knew otherwise that opposition was widespread. He pulled out the conspiracy theory card, claiming these revolts were the work of a few local elites and "malcontent persons" aiming "to confirm, inflame, and systematize the spirit of opposition."[18]

Washington concurred with Hamilton's sentiments. He feared the rebellion was fomented by French revolutionary-style activism in political clubs that arose in the wake of a visit to the U.S. by French Ambassador Charles Genêt. The conspiratorial paranoia is evident in Washington's letters: the clubs were designed "primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people of the government" and spread "nefarious doctrines with a view to poison and discontent the minds of the people."[19]

Both pretended that the whole political fabric of America hung on suppressing this allegedly small, local rebellion. Washington feared "anarchy and confusion." Hamilton went over the top, writing, "It appears to me that the very existence of government demands this course."[20] In this same letter to Washington, on August 2, 1794, Hamilton provided a very specific plan of action for raising the militia of several States: that is, the raising of at least 12,000 troops to shock and awe the rebels. Newspapers picked up the French conspiracy motif and the exaggeration, decrying "total subversion of government" due to "sans culottes of Pittsburgh."[21] And yet despite the alleged threat to the whole foundation and existence of government itself, Hamilton revealed the real issue at the root of the administration's firmness: "The immediate question is whether the government of the United States shall ever raise revenue by any internal tax." Determined to solidify and uphold this central power, Hamilton was willing to exercise another—the military—and shed American blood.

But the military means to the end couldn't be on the surface of the program lest the administration risk alienating the public. This is not to say they respected the will of the people, for Hamilton would write Washington later saying he had "long since learned to hold popular opinion of no value" while pursuing his own unpopular agendas.[22] Instead, they saw public opinion as an obstacle to be maneuvered and manipulated. Thus, they began preparing for war as much as possible, and yet going through the motions

required by a peaceful solution with the mind that these motions would fail. Hamilton went so far as purposefully to undermine peace negotiations with a series of letters under the pseudonym "Tully"—again propagandizing the public with the conspiracy plot.[23] Around the same time, he was having General Henry Lee begin the draft and prepare the troops with the command to keep it secret and to postdate all written orders to September 1, to make it look as if the administration had not been planning attack all along. The whole effort was a public façade:

> For "particular reasons" of a political nature, no one was to know that the decision to raise an army had been made before August 25. The peace negotiations were a sham, but a necessary political maneuver to forestall criticism of the administration's policy. It must *appear* that the President had made every effort to settle the dispute without resort to arms, even though he privately longed to teach the western Pennsylvanians a stern lesson.[24]

That lesson would come upon these western Pennsylvanians, but whereas Hamilton had earlier pretended the revolt was localized there, he now prepared a show of force calculated to include opposition joined by several other surrounding States and counties. From this he concluded the need for at least 12,000 soldiers. And he was out for more than the suppression of the rebellion. He wanted to make public examples of some of the rebels, as he would later write to Washington, November 11, 1794: "Tomorrow the measures for apprehending persons and seizing stills will be carried into effect. I hope there will be found characters fit for examples, and who can be made so."[25] With the power of the Militia Acts behind them, an inter-state militia of 13,000 was raised, and personally led by Washington and Hamilton on horseback to quash the "rebellion."

These two rebellions, however, illustrate the power of the centralized militia and thus the ability for the central government to impose its will on its subjects. Before the Constitution, the people of Massachusetts could choose whether or not to support the Governor's call to raise a militia, and most did not. People were left free to decide if the cause were just—a much more biblical design. All of this changed with the advent of the Constitution. Now, the standing army power was enshrined and the Hamiltonian machine was dedicated to making it even more powerful. And

every “free” able-bodied man was forced into the slavery of conscription—whether they agreed with the justness of the cause or not. And many people did disagree, and Washington knew it: he was fearful that even the Militia Acts would not be powerful enough to force the raising of the militia.[26] These fears were, of course, allayed, and thankfully, there was very little bloodshed as the overwhelming forces melted any organized opposition. But this was never the point: the point was to have the military power to enforce the will of the central government despite the possible unpopularity of its decrees—*the very thing the prescient antifederalists warned against*.

Thus, while some twenty men were arrested in the raid, and several indicted in Philadelphia, only two were ever convicted in court, and George Washington eventually pardoned them. After all that public façade and exercise of overwhelming force, why finally pardon the only convicts out of a movement which he and Hamilton both had described publicly, repeatedly, as “treason”?[27] Because the point was never really to uphold justice: it was rather to impose the will of the central government. It was to crush all possibility of political control beyond the taxing and warring dictates of Washington, D.C. In this, the response to the Whisky Rebellion was successful, and it was built on the back of the Constitution. In these regards, the United States departed further from the biblical standard of a free society—specifically in the creation, expansion, and use of its military power.

This change was a small but effective beginning. It was also a precedent for much more to come. Yes, the Constitution created this power, and it was used overwhelmingly to crush political dissent to Hamilton’s tax scheme. But at least the national forces remained somewhat small. Prior to the Civil War, the entire active peacetime militias stood at a total of only 16,000 troops. And at least during this time, those forces were not used *beyond* constitutionally-achieved powers. But the next step in the growing loss of freedom in this area would do just that.

He who has the guns

Thomas Jefferson famously said (we paraphrase), “When the people fear the government, you have tyranny. When the government fears the people, you have liberty.” Whoever has the power to enforce their will is servant to the other.

This same point was made by Carroll Quigley, the prolific Georgetown historian of the evolution of civilizations, the Anglo-American establishment, and weapon systems, and also mentor to Bill Clinton. In more than one place, he noted

> When weapons are cheap and easy to obtain and to use, almost any man may obtain them, and the organized structure of the society, such as the state, can obtain no better weapons than the ordinary, industrious, private citizen. This very rare historical condition existed about 1880, but is now only a dim memory, since the weapons obtainable by the state today are far beyond the pocktebook, understanding, or competence of the ordinary citizen.
>
> When weapons are of the "amateur" type of 1880, as they were in Greece in the fifth century, B.C., they are widely possessed by citizens, power is similarly dispersed, and no minority can compel the majority to yield to its will. With such an "amateur weapons system" (if other conditions are not totally unfavorable), we are likely to find majority rule and a relatively democratic political system. But on the contrary, when a period can be dominated by complex and expensive weapons that only a few persons can afford to possess or can learn to use, we have a situation where the minority who control such "specialist" weapons can dominate the majority who lack them. In such a society, sooner or later, an authoritarian political system that reflects the inequality in control of weapons will be established.[28]

Again: when the people have more and better guns than the standing armies of government, then the government fears the people and you have greater freedom. When the government invests in specialized super-weapons and the specialists required to use them, then the people fear the government and you have tyranny. The principle is simple: there must be proper distribution of *power* in order for freedom to exist.

The same principle applies to the balance of powers between the branches of the federal government as well as between the federal government and the State governments. We see both cases clearly in American history, with one outstanding example coming in the confrontation between Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney and the Executive branch under Abraham Lincoln. The episode illustrates the

Executive use of armed military force in America, against Constitutional authority, and in the face of a federal court decision to the contrary.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Lincoln responded to the skirmish at Ft. Sumter by arresting every outspoken Southern partisan he could get his hands on—suspending their right to habeas corpus. One pro-Lincoln legal historian admits,

> Without the sanction of legislation, the federal government arrested by the thousands men whom it knew or suspected to be dangerous or disaffected, and confined them without charges and without trial in military prisons as long as it saw fit—and public opinion generally acquiesced in this as a fairly necessary measure of war-time precaution. The number of such executive arrests has been variously estimated up to as high as 38,000. The War Department records, confessedly very incomplete, show over 13,000.[29]

The Executive branch's usurpation of an exclusively Congressional power—the suspension of habeas corpus—is admitted by most to have been unconstitutional, and thus "necessary" or "popular" are therefore irrelevant matters legally speaking. This was acknowledged at the time, and it did not take long for a test case to reach the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Taney immediately issued a writ of habeas corpus for John Merryman, an imprisoned lieutenant from the Maryland militia. General Caldwalader at Ft. McHenry rebuffed the delivery. Angered by the army's defiance of the highest court of the land—not to mention the Constitution itself—Taney sent a federal marshal to arrest the General. Attempting to issue this second order, the marshal was refused entry to the Fort and thus returned to the court a second time unsuccessful. Taney then proceeded to try Merryman *ex parte* and found the arrest unconstitutional. In his famous decision *Ex parte Merryman* (1861), he lamented how the Executive had installed the very type of military tyranny the founders feared and one worse than the British monarchies ever dreamed:

> The people of the United Colonies, who had themselves lived under [the English constitution's] protection, while they were British subjects, were well aware of the necessity of this safeguard for their personal liberty. And no one can believe that, in framing a government

> intended to guard still more efficiently the rights and liberties of the citizen, against executive encroachment and oppression, they would have conferred on the president a power which the history of England had proved to be dangerous and oppressive in the hands of the crown; and which the people of England had compelled it to surrender, after a long and obstinate struggle on the part of the English executive to usurp and retain it. . . .
>
> If the president of the United States may suspend the writ, then the constitution of the United States has conferred upon him more regal and absolute power over the liberty of the citizen, than the people of England have thought it safe to entrust to the crown; a power which the queen of England cannot exercise at this day, and which could not have been lawfully exercised by the sovereign even in the reign of Charles the First.

He then explains the depth of the infraction on Lincoln's part. This was no minor stunt, but a thorough and conscientious defiance of the U.S. Constitution:

> The military authority in this case has gone far beyond the mere suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. It has, by force of arms, thrust aside the judicial authorities and officers to whom the constitution has confided the power and duty of interpreting and administering the laws, and substituted a military government in its place, to be administered and executed by military officers.

His argument turns from analysis to warning:

> These great and fundamental laws, which congress itself could not suspend, have been disregarded and suspended, like the writ of habeas corpus, by a military order, supported by force of arms. Such is the case now before me, and I can only say that if the authority which the constitution has confided to the judiciary department and judicial officers, may thus, upon any pretext or under any circumstances, be usurped by the military power, at its discretion, the people of the United States are no longer living under a government of laws, but

> every citizen holds life, liberty and property at the will and pleasure of the army officer in whose military district he may happen to be found.

This capstone to Taney's argument arrives us at the point of our section: the question of how freedom was lost. It was lost among other instances when Lincoln *used the army to override the Constitution and the Judiciary* for several thousand individuals. At this point, it didn't matter what any laws said; it mattered who had the guns to enforce their will. Taney's last paragraph states, "I have exercised all the power which the constitution and laws confer upon me, but that power has been resisted by a force too strong for me to overcome." He was also lucky to escape himself: Lincoln had actually written an Executive arrest order for the Chief Justice himself (!), but left it to the discretion of the marshal to carry it out.[30] Apparently, neither had the nerve to actually go that far.

In this particular encounter, nevertheless, Lincoln had the guns; he had the *standing army*. Ironically, it was the very fabric he was cutting to pieces which had given him the swords with which to do so. In a very real sense, the Constitution devoured the Constitution—and with the very teeth of the military powers with which Hamilton and Washington had spiked it. Indeed, as Lincoln suspended habeas corpus and began arresting those thousands, he appealed directly to extra powers created by Hamilton and Washington in that old Militia Act of 1792. The former pair had not gone so far as to suspend other constitutional rights, but Lincoln was prepared to pick up where they left off, using the same mentality of necessity. And the war games were just beginning.

Lessons of these first conflicts and beyond

Just stop momentarily and consider what freedom had been destroyed militarily just to this point. We have not even included the Civil War, but only the very beginning of it. Beginning with Washington's appearance on the scene of American history, we have seen virtually every one of the biblical principles of war completely trampled. We have seen 1) wars started unnecessarily for corporate influence and profit, 2) wars waged by governments on their own people in order to impose taxes and prevent secession, 3) taxes imposed by military force in order to pay off previous war debts held by central banks, 4) the creation of a standing army, 5)

military conscription of every able-bodied male, 6) the suspension of trial by jury, 7) the unconstitutional opposition of a Supreme Court order by the President backed by his standing army. At this point, it is helpful to recall the words of the political advocate of peace, James Burgh, whom we quoted earlier:

> There is no end to observations on the difference between the measures likely to be pursued by a minister backed by a standing *army*, and those of a court awed by the fear of an *armed people*. . . . No kingdom can be secured otherwise than by arming the people.

Indeed, there is no end to the differences. In fact, there *has been* no end to the differences, as America continued down the path of more greatly centralizing its armed forces.

While it would take us too far afield to delve into the mess of Civil War scholarship, and considering the risk of sidetracking this study with the high degree of partisanship attending that focus, it is nevertheless necessary to mention the most important military sin of that War: Sherman's and Sheridan's doctrine and practices of scorched earth and total warfare. Against the biblical principles, mentioned earlier, of preserving the means of life—fruit-bearing trees, etc.—these Union Generals burned crops, destroyed livestock, destroyed property of all sorts, including innocent businesses, towns, churches, and infrastructure. Though one piece of Sherman's official written policy forbade much of this, it was openly disobeyed; Sherman was well aware of this and did nothing to prevent it. He would write that if necessary, he would "take every life, every acre of land."[31] The swath of devastation fifty miles wide and two hundred and eighty-five miles long was by his own admission mostly unnecessary.

> When he reached Savannah he estimated that only 20 percent of the destruction "has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simply waste and destruction."[32]

Despite all we know and have heard of Sherman's "March to the Sea," there is no detailed scholarly study of the devastation and plunder by Union troops. There are commonly repeated stories but few footnotes for atrocities like wholesale burning of churches with people locked inside; neither are

there too many detailed denials of such claims. One historian notes that any such detailed study of Sherman's total war

> would be a tale replete with wanton destruction, robbery, arson, rape, torture, and murder, with both blacks and whites as victims. Such atrocities, which Northern soldiers and newspaper reporters witnessed and described in detail, often took place with the tacit or, in some instances, explicit approval of Union officers.[33]

If this legacy of Sherman's (and Sheridan's as well) were not enough, what is far less told is their persisting influence in American politics well into the later nineteenth century. Their constant activism to increase the powers of the central standing army, to abolish the local militia system, and their eagerness to employ the national army in more creative ways stateside, are all neglected pieces of history. In short, these Generals became career military men, and career military men need continually to create new enemies and new battles to justify their existence. As a result, a large section of America increasingly became a militarized nation marked by a military mindset that reached first for a military solution to any major problem. America was on the verge of becoming, if it had not already, an Empire.

The empire strikes first

We read the anti-federalist "John DeWitt" earlier speaking of the danger of a standing army: "It is universally agreed, that a militia and a standing body of troops never flourished on the same soil."[34] During the Progressive Era, 1877–1920, when Democrats and Republicans alike were seeking to turn "exceptional" America into an empire—or a New World Order altogether—forging a single, strong, standing national army was a necessary ingredient to do so. During this time, the tension of which DeWitt wrote rose to its greatest expression yet. The resistance by this time was futile: the organizational efforts of the state and local militias did little except create a political structure—the National Guard Association—which actually facilitated the imperialists' goal of centralizing the militias.[35] In the end, the corporatists, industrialists, internationalists, and would-be messiahs combined to make America a military world empire.

The ringleaders in the build-up included Generals Sherman and Sheridan, backed by the intellectual firepower of West Point professor Emory Upton. As Reconstruction waned, less use was made of the military. The former million-man army had been reduced to 30,000 by 1870. One scholar notes, "When the Germans marched into Paris in 1870, America was firmly committed to a thorough demilitarization."[36] The forces that prevented this situation and spared Sherman's dream from obscurity involved, as usual, big corporate interests—both domestic and international—including the ever-expanding railroads. But they also involved the more modern twist of increasing class conflict, as Marxist-fueled labor violence became a reality in America.[37] Threats from both organized labor and frontier Indians drove many large businesses to favor military intervention, and the Shermanites, led by Sherman himself, were eager to respond.

The intellectual force came, as we said, from Upton, but it was not an American original: he had to import it. "Favored by Sherman, Upton was sent on a world tour in 1875 to report on the state of the art." After viewing all the world's military systems, he settled on Bismarck's Prussia—the very nation that was centralizing and waging aggressive intrigues and wars while America was demilitarizing. It was, of course, a system which featured a centralized standing army, and thus Upton "called for the abolition of the militia system and [for] its replacement with an 'expansible' national organization."[38] This structure would preserve the careers and ambitions of the military professionals, and invest them with permanent powers that were up to this point available to them only in times of war.

The plans, however eloquently and nobly envisioned, made little headway at first. Even with the popular fears spread by the railroad strikes of 1877 and beyond, several entrenched American attitudes resisted the idea of a centralized standing army. Belief in States' rights was still strong, especially in the South, and neither local militias nor State governors desired to cede military authority to a central power. It would still be some years before the full "Uptonian" centralization would come.

Immediately after the Civil War, Sherman adjusted his militaristic vision to the "pacification" of Indians—using force openly in service of the railroads. When Ulysses S. Grant became president in 1869, he instituted Sherman as Commanding General of the army with command over all ground west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rockies. Sherman immediately called for "the final solution of the Indian problem"—a phrase

later reapplied to Jews by Adolf Hitler. Sherman famously stated his agenda for the Plains Indians in plain terms: "We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women and children," he wrote to Grant. For his troops: "During an assault, the soldiers cannot pause to distinguish between male and female, or even discriminate as to age." As a long-term policy, the Sioux should "feel the superior power of the Government," until they "are all killed or taken to a country where they can be watched." Indeed, "All the Indians will have to be killed or be maintained as a species of paupers."[39] When it was over and the Indians were either dead or herded onto reservations, Sherman pretended the railroads had done the Indians a favor. He called the fight "the great battle of civilization with barbarism" which did more for "the subjugation and civilization of the Indian than all other causes combined . . . in which I feel as much pride as for my share in any of the battles in which I took part."[40] But "civilization" of the Indian was hardly his original plan:

> Sherman's ultimate objective "which he did not quite achieve" was murder of the entire Indian population. Just before his death in 1891 he bitterly complained in a letter to his son that if it were not for "civilian interference" by various government officials, he and his armies would have "gotten rid of them all."[41]

Partly due to this cause, which was corrupt in the eyes of so many, desertion from the military reached historic highs during this era. The rate peaked at almost 32.6 percent in 1871, but between 1867 and 1891, a third of all army recruits fled service—a total of 88,475 men.[42] This presented a problem for Sherman and company, whose missionary-military vision into the future depended upon the Bismarckian-style military Upton had described. But there remained enough political opposition to expansionism and nationalization to prevent the ultimate realization of these goals for the time being.

Corporate and banking forces provided the main push, as we noted, toward a powerful international military force. These never quit trying to find ways to leverage military power for their profit during this whole era. The overthrow of Hawaii by U.S. business interests is a classic case in point. A group of American businessmen and lawyers formed a secret society and led a *coup* against the sitting monarch in 1887. Intercepting a

shipment of hunting rifles, they forced him to sign a new Constitution which greatly decreased his powers and favored an assembly dominated by the foreign business interests. Ultimately, they planned to have Hawaii annexed to the U.S. in order to avoid paying tariffs on their shipments of sugar, fruit, etc. Among the leaders of this movement was lawyer Sanford Dole whose cousin James would open a pineapple plantation there and establish what is today the Dole Food Company.

The sitting Queen Lili‘uokalani, however, soon gained public support for a new Constitution in 1893 which would have effectively disenfranchised the American conspirators. They responded by using the bureaucracy they had created to prevent her efforts with military force. The aptly named (in big-brother fashion) “Committee for Safety” called in American Marines for support. The force and tactics were too great for the Queen to repel and she was forced to surrender to U.S. armed forces. A provisional government reigned for a few years before McKinley officially annexed the Islands in 1898. All the native Hawaiians boycotted the official flag-changing ceremony. In February of 1900, Sanford Dole was appointed governor. In 1901, his cousin James established his pineapple empire.

This was the era of all-out empire, and the McKinley administration was the incarnation of its spirit. What would take place under his watch would dwarf Dole’s little island *coup*. He would involve the armed forces in numerous international conflicts on behalf of bankers and corporations, including the Spanish-American War and a consequent bloodbath in the Philippines. While trouble was brewing in Cuba, American businesses suffered volatile conditions. The uncertainty troubled them more than the threat of war, for at least with war one knows something of what to expect. A sharp decline in business in March of 1898 pressured the decision to go to war. These pressures from the business front increased after Senator Proctor of Vermont toured Cuba and immediately upon his return recommended a nation-building war to liberate the Cuban people from poor government. Business newspapers formerly opposed to war, at least in public, took the opportunity to turn. The New York *Commercial Advertiser* bent with the pretense of caution and the welfare of humanity: war should come, not for “conquest,” but for “humanity and love of freedom, and above all”—and here it would tip its hand—“desire that the commerce and industry of every part of the world shall have full freedom of development in the whole world’s interest.”[43] The *Wall Street Journal* chimed in as well,

as did others. Some welcomed the prospect for better stability; others saw a quick profit potential: the New York *Tribune* reported that war could provide a "speculators' movement" with a "temporary flurry in American stocks."[44]

The administration maintained the same thin moral pretense despite the fact that it had already moved into ultimatum mode months before, and despite McKinley's inaugural address declaration that "peace is preferable to war in almost every contingency."[45] Stewart Woodford, the Ambassador to Spain cited four reasons to restore peace in Cuba immediately; two of the reasons kept up the moral ruse, but the others shamelessly tipped the same old cards: First there was terrible suffering in Cuba, and second, sanitary conditions had broken down, threatening disease even to the U.S.; but more importantly, Americans depended upon Cuban sugar and commerce, and, Woodford told McKinley, "I emphasized the tremendous pecuniary loss which people of the United States suffer and must suffer until peace is restored."[46]

The administration was not alone in the charade. During the same period, the banks were bolstering gold reserves in preparation for war lending while pretending they wished to avoid it. *Bankers Magazine* announced that "while not desiring war, it is apparent that this country now has an ample coin basis for sustaining the credit operation which a conflict would probably make necessary."[47]

And despite his death in 1891, Sherman's ghost still haunted the military build-up: his brother was McKinley's Secretary of State. Despite its own willingness to go to war if necessary, and its pressures on Spain to restore peace in the midst of revolution, the administration opposed Spain's imposition of its own military force to subdue the island. The Secretary even unfavorably compared Spain's Cuban concentration camps and scorched-earth campaigns to Sherman's "march to the sea"! It was no joke: Sherman's invention was adopted as the standard throughout the world, and Spain was no exception.

The further intricacies of the road to war and the waging of its battles are less important here than the outcomes. The main one was the extension of the war into the Philippines, which spilled over after the 1898 Treaty which ended the war. Spain ceded her colonial territories, including the Philippines, which was also fomenting revolution at the exact moment. The U.S. inherited the problem and decided to turn cannons on it. After having

attacked Spain for its inhuman herding of hundreds of thousands of Cubans into concentration camps and scorching their lands, crops, and farms, the United States employed exactly the same policy in the Philippines, exterminating somewhere between 200,000 and one million people in the process. Entire villages of women and children were killed, concentration camps maintained and detainees shot for sport if found outside after seven p.m. At the height of Progressive "American exceptionalism," it was perhaps exceptional only for its wickedness.

"The most important national legislation in militia history . . ."

The second important outcome was the use of the Spanish-American War as a justification for greater centralization of the old militia system. This had been, as we noted, the dream of Sherman and others for some time. But what Sherman and Upton could only dream of, Elihu Root—one of the most influential men in American history of whom most people have never heard—would steer dexterously through Congress with impressive success. The result would be the Militia Act of 1903 and 1908, leading to the National Defense Act of 1916—the final metamorphoses of the American military into a full standing army largely at the behest of an imperialistic corporate-federal state.

In 1901, Teddy Roosevelt filled the presidential saddle, adding a fresh zeal for warfare to McKinley's imperialism. In his first annual message to Congress, delivered in December, Roosevelt called for greater centralization of the army and especially a strengthening of the navy in order to protect American commercial interests.[48]

Elihu Root was connected to countless big business, law, and banking interests.[49] He was an internationalist, would later be involved with the League of Nations, and sit as President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1912–1925. He was also Roosevelt's Secretary of War. One night over dinner the bombastic Teddy ended a random disagreement with, "Oh, go to the devil, Root!" The Secretary raised his glass of champagne with the toast: "I come, Sir, I come."[50]

There was little the two disagreed upon. Even before he began his most important legislative efforts, Root found a legal loophole for the President to implement his directives without Congressional approval. In 1901, Root advanced an Executive order—"General Order 155"—which

established the Army War College. Ostensibly a training facility for officers, it was a precursor to the professional General Staff envisioned by Upton twenty-five years earlier.[51] The effort of centralizing military education aimed at eventually imposing central requirements for education upon all military, including State militia. This step was made purely by the Executive branch.

But the Legislative soon followed. Roosevelt's State of the Union gave momentum to the army cause. Along with Ohio Congressman General Charles Dick, Root maneuvered the Militia Act of 1903 through Congress. The Act essentially centralized the State militias under a two-tiered National Guard, allowed the President to determine minimum enlistment numbers for the militias, placed them all under his command in case or war, insurrection, or to enforce federal laws, and any soldier who refused to answer the call could be court-martialed.[52] James Parker, assistant to the Army Chief of Staff at the time, wrote in summary: "Under this bill, the National Guardsman becomes, at the outbreak of war, virtually a United States soldier" who "must in future be ready to turn out at a moment's notice." He was relieved that "there no longer seems to be the danger that (as was done in 1898) the militia regiments will be converted into United States Volunteer Regiments."[53] He anticipated a force of 150,000 guardsmen ready within 24 hours of the President's call.

The act was a drastic move away from biblical freedom and toward the humanistic Warfare-Welfare State. The military's own historical account laments the fact that prior to the Act, local militias were simply too voluntary: a compulsory standing army was needed. State guardsmen "were under no legal obligation to volunteer, and a significant number refused either because of fears over how their unit would be treated by the Regular Army or from concern over hardships that volunteering would impose on their families."[54] In other words, before the Dick Act—as it was called after the Congressman—the State militias were closer to a biblical model. Moving away from this empire-hindering system was, in the words of a military historian, "the most important national legislation in militia history."[55]

To persuade the States—which had formerly been staunchly opposed—to acquiesce to the loss of control, the Feds bought them off. Appropriations were given the States to pay for new arms and ammunition,

and to pay for the increased training measures state guardsmen would now have to endure. It was a classic "don't take that cheese" trap, and the states bit. The Feds did agree to a maximum time in which guardsmen could be forced to serve the President—nine months—but this limitation would be short-lived.

The nationalizers' aim was clearly to support empire, and however vehemently they denied it, they betrayed their real agenda in almost the same breath. While claiming to preserve "state sovereignty," and repeating Washington's dictum that "any measure that prepares for war tends to prevent war," Parker clearly anticipated that the militias would be used: "That the time will come when they will be needed cannot be doubted." And why would they undoubtedly be needed? The answer should be obvious by now. American business interests—the expanding American empire—would require it:

> The United States, a nation of nearly a hundred million people, is determined to exercise its legitimate influence in the world's affairs. It cannot, with the blood of the American in its veins, adopt a Chinese policy of exclusion and isolation. And so war is foreordained.[56]

Indeed, war was foreordained, but it would not come too soon before two more Acts could build on the centralizing foundations of the Dick Act. In 1908, the Militia Act was amended. The nine-month limit was abolished, and the President could determine the length of service at his whim. Also, the new form allowed for a more truly international force. The former act prevented Guard units from being forced to serve outside the U.S. The amended version abolished that restriction. Now, the President could order state militias anywhere in the world to fight, and they would face court martial if they resisted. In return for selling their soldiers into Federal service (read: returning to the slavery of Egypt), the states received increased funding.[57]

But even this was not enough. The real centralizers did not consider this arrangement "a truly national militia force that was a ready reserve for the Army."[58] The 1916 National Defense Act—passed well before American involvement in WWI—picked up right where the 1908 amendment had left off. Donnelly notes,

> This law completed the work of the Root reforms in determining the Guard's role in national defense and asserting federal control over state military forces. The act doubled armory drill requirements and tripled the length of summer training. . . . Guardsmen had to take both state and federal oaths and could be drafted into federal service. Moreover, the Regulars obtained federal reserve forces of their own, both officer and enlisted, and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. In return, the size of the Guard was to be expanded to 430,000; the annual federal subsidy was replaced by an annual budget to cover most Guard expenses; . . . In exchange for continued existence and the hefty increase in federal funding, the Guard had lost most of its autonomy and much of its fraternal character so prized by state soldiers. Most Regular officers continued to view the Guard with disdain. And while the Guard's authorized strength had been greatly increased, it would find itself in the coming world wars submerged within a multimillion-man force composed mainly of federal draftees.

Thus the revolution of the army was complete: it had gone from something closer to a biblical model, to the epitome of a centralized warfare State, empire-ready, standing army, funded by a large general treasury—*everything the Bible forbade civil governments to engage in*. Everything the Bible, in 1 Samuel 8, explained as the definition of godless tyranny.

It would be only months before these measures—which as Parker admitted were designed for future world wars—were put into action. "The mobilization for World War I demonstrated the *triumph of federal control* over the Guard that the Root reforms had brought."[59]

Triumph of federal control. Let the phrase just linger in all its glory for a moment. Now, recall the warning of the antifederalist writer Centinel some 128 years earlier:

> In the character of a [national] militia, you may be dragged from your families and homes to any part of the continent, and for any length of time, at the discretion of a future Congress: and as a militia, you may be made the unwilling instruments of oppression, under the direction of government; there is no exemption upon account of conscientious scruples of bearing arms; no equivalent to be received in lieu of personal services. The militia of Pennsylvania may be marched to

> Georgia or New Hampshire, however incompatible with their interests or consciences;—in short, they may be made as mere machines as Prussian soldiers.[60]

Or, the militia of Pennsylvania may be shipped to Germany, or Normandy, or Iwo Jima, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, or true, once again against American citizens on American soil in our day. Once the interests of the central State—of the federal government—trump the biblical standards of freedom, *all is lost*. The Warfare State becomes a Total State—just like Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8 warned against.

The Warfare-Welfare State

The curse of the Total State, as we have seen, is something of a package deal. Samuel's warnings in 1 Samuel 8 were meant to deter the people from breaking God's laws revealed in Deuteronomy 17—lusting for a "king like other nations." And just like the king forbidden in those laws—the king who has a standing army, a large treasury, international entanglements, and enslaves his own people—the picture Samuel painted was one of a mixed Warfare-Welfare State. As God told Samuel to "solemnly warn them,"

> So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for

yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." (1 Sam. 8:7–18)

I expound upon this verse further in *God versus Socialism* (pp. 14–19). For here, suffice it to note the total nature of this package of tyranny. The people's desire for national greatness and, for some, just plain justice as they see it, drives them to demand greater Executive power for the State. But greater Executive power always takes on a life of its own. Almost simultaneously, a powerful military State grows into a Total State in which the State dominates every area of life. It's nothing short of enslavement, whether the people who called for it admit it or not.

Perennially, war has been the greatest centralizing mechanism to achieve the Total State. This was noted in recent times by the famed military historian, Martin van Creveld:

> Had it not been for the need to wage war, then almost certainly the centralization of power in the hands of the great monarchs would have been much harder to bring about. Had it not been for the need to wage war, then the development of bureaucracy, taxation, even welfare services such as education, health, etc. would probably have been much slower. As the record shows, in one way or another all of them were bound up with the desire to make people more willing to fight on behalf of their respective states.
>
> To focus on the field of economics alone, the Bank of England as the first institution of its kind originated in the wars which Britain fought against Louis XIV. Early in the nineteenth century the first modern income taxes were likewise the product of war, as were both legal tender and its most important specimen, the greenback. Later, to cite but three examples, neither some of the early attempts to provide social security, nor the abandonment of the gold standard in 1914, nor the Bolshevik Revolution (representing the attempt to institute total state control over an economy) would have come about in the form they did, had it not been for the need of the state to mobilize its resources and wage war against its neighbors.[61]

These are bold assertions, but the facts bear them out. Van Creveld's last few examples refer to the early Twentieth Century, the era leading up to

World War I. Consider the changes in America under Woodrow Wilson during this war.

The Overman Act of 1918 gave President Wilson expansive powers over every aspect of American life during the war. His centralizing efforts decked the government with countless new bureaus: the War Labor Policies Board, Shipping, Food Administration, the War Industries Board (WIB), and many more, all with absolute power over their sphere.

The WIB was one of the most egregious as it established a genuine military-industrial complex that would disband, in name at least, only after the War. It created national moral hazard that led to the nationalization of unions, mines, railroads, and other industries.[62] This created a monopolistic system that many businesses and groups did not want to give up once the war was over. They began to use their influence to pass new laws to restore their positions. As a result, despite the fact that Wilson disbanded the WIB immediately after the War, there was "no returning to prewar conditions."[63] Wilson's move was merely a political shift for the complex which resulted in Congress being in charge instead of the Executive. This meant that now, all the special interests of Congress were involved in trying to control and get a share of the military-industrial booty. The structure created by the emergency control was still in place, it just had new masters.

If national moral hazard were not enough, the Wilson War State also created it internationally. America became the conscious model for Germany itself (which copied Wilson in a final attempt to reorganize and win the war), Lenin's "War Communism," and Mussolini's early version of Fascism. All were modeled on Wilson's accomplishment, and all have had devastating effects for decades thereafter and helped bring about World War II.

Wilson's War State also imposed a national mind control campaign. This is, van Creveld states, a standard aspect of war: it creates an "emotionally unifying effect" which the war-empowered State exploits to maintain support for state-empowering wars. Thus, Wilson created a propaganda and idea police called the Committee on Public Information (CPI). It was responsible for a campaign against German-Americans and other immigrants: so-called "hyphenated Americans" were automatically suspect for failure to be as dedicated to the war as they should be. Teddy Roosevelt famously accused them of "treason," saying they "terrorize" America.

These immigrant families needed to be watched closely, and so came about the creation of the neighborhood watch—not your modern neighborhood watch on the lookout for burglars, etc., but hundreds of thousands of volunteer, pro-war enthusiasts spying on each other in order to report anything from their neighbors they considered suspicious. This, of course, destroys neighborliness and bonds in local communities—a perennial desire of the nationalists and centralizers.

The CIP authorized the "four-minute men." These were, at their height, 70,000 volunteers empowered to interrupt *any* free assembly of people (churches included), invited or not, to give a four-minute speech in support of the war. The speeches were ostensibly about facts and progress—basic info about the war—but really were used to praise the war and the government's conduct. It was a national propaganda campaign empowered to commandeer every audience in the nation by government force.

Education was not immune from the CIP. Textbooks were scoured to remove all mention of things German. While social pressures forced the renaming of hamburgers (a German name) to "liberty steak," and sauerkraut was relabeled "liberty cabbage," school children were also spared the ghastly introduction to Bach and Beethoven due to their German origin—and this phenomenon lasted well into the 20s. The German language was no longer taught in schools, and many German-language newspapers were shut down across the country.

Censorship soon got real political muscle. The 1917 Espionage Act was aimed as much at discouraging disloyalty as direct espionage: it gave broad powers to the Feds to prosecute anyone suspected of saying anything that might interfere with the U.S. military or which could even be seen as promoting the success of the enemies, as well as anything hindering military recruitment. This essentially ended all public criticism of the war effort and encouraged those not sufficiently patriotic to remain silent.

If this were not enough, the 1918 Sedition Act expanded it by forbidding "any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States . . . or the flag of the United States, or the uniform of the Army or Navy." This made it easy to prosecute citizens for even casual comments made in public, and nearly 200,000 Americans were accused and indicted, many of which were found guilty and fined heavily or imprisoned for the "seditious" things they allegedly

said. Fines reached as much as $10,000–$200,000 in today's money—and imprisonment was up to twenty years.

The conservative sociologist Robert A. Nisbet relates how Americans came to accept the centralized power despite the social damage, loss of freedom, and destruction of the love of neighbor:

> And yet despite the atmosphere of outright terror in the lives of a considerable minority of Americans, despite the food shortages for civilians, despite the presence throughout the country of superpatriots serving the government as neighborhood watchers for the purpose of reporting any act or word that seemed suspicious, despite the virtual militarization of the local schools and their textbooks, despite the maleficent custom of white feathers being pinned by women volunteers on the lapels of some men seen rightly or wrongly as slackers—despite all this, many Americans seemed to become fond of the War State. Lost neighborhood, local, and other liberties didn't seem too high a price to pay for the economic benefits in the form of high wages, props to unionism, quick and generally favorable arbitration agreements for workers, and the novel availability of spendable money, cash in hand. And how exhilarating to see the speed with which the national government could move in matters where local governments stalled and stalled.[64]

In other words, the war created a powerful voting block of people, dependent on government coercion for their lifestyle, who could use the national government to override opposition from their neighbors and other locals—all the while maintaining the appearance of being the most American of patriotic Americans.

Out of all this, the centralizers leveraged two valuable lessons: first, there is the power of collective self-interests. It is far easier to promote the State's power when you create a large voting block dependent upon government benefits. (This can be maximized, by the way, by creating many *types* of benefits and thus hooks and bait for every potential dependency out there.) The point is to get as many people as possible self-interested in a centralized welfare state. Second, is power of crisis. Crisis—most often war or threat of war—is invaluable as a means of herding the populace toward one common goal, one set of beliefs, values, priorities,

ethics, tasks, etc., and thus of getting a diverse group of free individuals to sacrifice their will to a central planning agency. With these two tools of power, we get first, the War State, and then the Welfare State. And the Welfare State—composed of self-interested dependents with no ethical conscience—remains in place, and society is never returned to the freedom it had before the war.

Neither, really, is the War State. Even though Wilson shut down the boards, the Army remained in peak-peacetime power. After the War, the National Defense Act of 1916—which had prepared for the War—was amended in 1920, but the size of the standing army remained at 298,000 with 400,000 reserves in the National Guard. The historical comparisons are startling. The standing army, pre-Civil War, never reached beyond 16,000 national regulars. Even after the Civil War, as has been mentioned, the army was gradually downsized to around 25,000 to Sherman's chagrin.[65] After the 1916 Act, that number vaulted to the hundreds of thousands and remained there. And of course, this takes money. Between the 1903 Dick Act and the 1916 Act alone, the army spent more than it had in the entire previous *century* combined. And that does not even count the costs of the War itself. Today, "defense" spending accounts for 20 percent of the Federal budget—over a third of which is deficit spending.

The effect of the combined Welfare and Warfare State—the Total State—is effectively to replace freedom with central planning across the board. After WWI in the U.S., there was a steady effort on the part of leftists and social Darwinists of all stripes to leverage the lingering centralized structures of the War State. The War had created a ripe opportunity for more elitist control. A slogan which first appeared in the 1920s was popularized by George Soule, then editor of *New Republic* magazine, in his 1932 book, *The Planned Society*: "We planned in war, why not in peace?" It was cry for central planning at the national level, and the outright replacement of local community and local sovereignty with national community.

To do this requires the government to replace local community—genuine community—with the appearance of a "community" at the national level. FDR did this explicitly in his first inaugural address, March 4, 1933, in which he mixes the language of a military mission with that of a national community:

> If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we can not merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible a leadership which aims at a larger good. This I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in time of armed strife.

This replaces local community with national community, personal morals with national ethics, religious language with political coercion, peacetime with wartime. But it was right about one thing: it would "bind upon us all" an obligation to the State

previously experienced only under the threat and stress of war. Not only was the old freedom gone, but even what relaxation occurred in the War State after the War was now reestablished and extended. Wilson's temporary War State became FDR's Welfare State, and every expansion of it since. Every political battle fought since has been fought in light of that new reality, and only in terms of the Welfare State. Since the New Deal era, the question is never Welfare State or no Welfare State, but what kind of a Welfare State and how big?

Nisbet expresses how war creates "community," but it is a different kind of community. It is

> the kind of community that is brought into existence by emergency and then reinforced by shared values and emotions which reach to the depths of human nature. Any veteran knows well the closeness, the intimacy, the sense of bond and attachment that can spring up in a newly formed outfit almost overnight.[66]

Recall in the recent popular title *Band of Brothers* which has been used more than once for books, movies, and a mini-series. It comes from Shakespeare's *Henry V* (IV, iii), where King Henry appeals to this very sentiment of brotherhood in the midst of war:

> And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be remembered—
> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
> For he today that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile

This new community alienates its members from normal life, from real community, and almost permanently alters the perspectives of the "brothers":

> when the war ended, millions of men and women found return to civil life—for all the fact that this return had been passionately dreamed of—unsettling, disquieting, not seldom disorienting to neurotic degree.[67]

Allegiances are no longer neighbor-to-neighbor, town-to-town, but rather to the central institution—the central State—first. People no longer relate to each other directly in terms of local customs, faith, and shared values. They no longer relate to each other horizontally, person-to-person. Now they relate to each other through the filter of the central State first. Our eyes focus there first, our ears hear it first, our hearts flutter first with the wave of the central State's war-torn flag, rather than burning with passion and pride for the principles taught by faith and family first. We hold our neighbor under suspicion first before we dare speak ill of our Nation; we'll spy, spit, tattle, and perhaps even torture that neighbor before we'd call Washington a tyrant and the latest War a deadly ruse—let alone refuse a government contract or check on principle.

Yet, for all of his talk of willingness and sacrifice among the people, FDR couldn't have cared less about their willingness. He planned to solve the nation's problems through central planning and sheer control if he believed it necessary:

> I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe. For the trust reposed in me I will return the courage and the devotion that befit the time. I can do no less.

> We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of the national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life.

The British historian A. J. P. Taylor describes the same transformation in his own country after World War I:

> Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state beyond the post office and the policeman. . . . He could travel abroad or leave his country forever without a passport or any sort of official permission. He could exchange his money without restriction or limit. He could buy goods from any country in the world on the same terms as he bought goods at home. For that matter a foreigner could spend his life in the country without permit and without informing the police. . . .
>
> All this was changed by the impact of the Great War. . . . The state established a hold over its citizens which though relaxed in peace time, was never to be removed and which the Second World War was again to increase. The history of the English people and the English State merged for the first time.[68]

And it is vitally important to understand and internalize this truth: this Welfare State is not primarily a result of political activism, per se, but the direct result of War and of the lasting social effects of War. War has been the great centralizing agent empowering totalitarian States throughout human history. Modern history is no different, and the United States has not been immune. Nisbet opens his review of the phenomenon with this observation:

> Any returned Framers of the Constitution would be quite as shocked by the extent and depth of the power of the national state in American lives today as they would be by war and the gargantuan military. The most cursory reading of the Constitution itself tells us that behind the labors which produced this document lay an abiding fear, distrust, hatred of the kinds of political power identified with the government of

> George III and with the centralized despotisms, such as France, Prussia, and Russia, on the Continent. Add to reading of the Constitution even a scanning of the Federalist Papers followed perhaps by a brief dipping into the annals of the Convention, and there can be no doubt of what the Framers most definitely did not want: a highly centralized, unitary political Leviathan.[69]

He is largely correct: not only did the Framers warn against this over and over, even foreigners did so. The famous visitor Alexis de Tocqueville clearly saw the destructive power of a military State, and the link between military power and a Total State. He wrote in 1840:

> All men of military genius are fond of centralization, which increases their strength; and all men of centralizing genius are fond of war, which compels nations to combine all their powers in the hands of the government. Thus the democratic tendency that leads men unceasingly to multiply the privileges of the state and to circumscribe the rights of private persons is much more rapid and constant among those democratic nations that are exposed by their position to great and frequent wars than among all others."[70]

Nisbet—a conservative, mind you, respected by Ronald Reagan—argues, "The history of the United States is ample illustration of the general soundness of Tocqueville's principle. This includes a look at presidents Jackson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, FDR, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and, very much in the procession, Ronald Reagan."[71] I say he is "largely" correct because, as I have shown, the war lust began much earlier than Jackson. It includes the Framers themselves as well. Nevertheless, "In each of these," Nisbet writes, "there is a conspicuous readiness to turn to political centralization, bureaucracy, and the heaping up of powers, so far as possible, in the central government even at the expense of a strictly read Constitution."[72]

You see the Welfare-Warfare State growing in tandem almost as early as Tocqueville wrote. The first major federal welfare measures in the U.S. resulted directly from war—war with the Indians. Ever since the great relocations of Indians that began in the 1830s, much of them under Jackson, there was constant argument between Congress (easterners) and the army in

the field (with westerners) over how to treat the Indians. Both sides referred to "pacification" by which they meant using whatever means necessary to make the Indians passive. Congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) wanted to keep sending handouts, food and supplies, to the reservations. This had been the practice for many years and had developed quite a reputation for corruption along the trail as supplies changed hands and were delivered by multiple government-contracted parties along the way.

As we saw, Sherman led the appeal for the army. He wanted to apply the same tactics of total devastation warfare against the Indians that he had used to defeat the South—slash and burn Atlanta. Many westerners were calling for all-out genocide as the only solution. In the 1870s, Sherman argued to have the BIA placed back under the Department of War (from which it had been removed in 1849), but lost the argument. In the end, the whole debate was over whether the Welfare or Warfare State would have the preeminence in dealing with the Indians. Either way, it was a situation bred directly out of war.

A clearer and more important case arose from Civil War Veterans, which we mentioned earlier under the topic of Welfare. War veterans received pensions from very early on, but the nature of these changed during the Civil War. As a recruitment measure, the Union promised pensions to all soldiers actually wounded in battle. Then, of course, it was cold to leave out widows and orphans of veterans, so these were included, too. Years later when debilitated veterans approached the administration with "old war wounds," it was impossible to tell which ones were being truthful. So they extended pensions to *all* Union veterans. The widows and orphans weren't enough, they had to include their siblings and in-laws. Soon, unemployed

laborers saw the potential for government handouts, and farmers clamored as well. In 1904, Teddy Roosevelt changed the definition of disability to include old age, which essentially made the program a true pension system. The Warfare State had created the Welfare State, and it has done nothing but grow ever since.[73]

From day one, the Warfare and Welfare States have been evil twins, constantly feeding and empowering the other; and war itself is the vampire which sucks the free blood out of their prey. War is waste, war is plunder, war is loot, war is destruction of wealth, morals, fidelity, and social bonds. Government-run welfare is all of those things, too. The two things are one

and the same, fueled by the same lusts, toward the same ends, by the same spirit.

War is hell

After his Indian-slaughtering days were all but over, General Sherman spent his final military days touring and lecturing students. During one speech, he gave the line that has since been paraphrased as, “War is hell.” There is little indication at all that Sherman was a religious man, and in fact he seems to have been critical of religion for most of his life. The “war is hell” sentiment for Sherman was more about scorched earth strategy than religious teaching. But he had no idea how religious it indeed was.

God’s covenantal promises to His people concluded with a list of blessings that would come upon them if they obeyed, but also a list of curses they would suffer for rebelling against Him. The curses for national disobedience are found in Deuteronomy 28:15 and following. Verses 15–19 and 25–33 are particularly relevant:

> But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. . . .
>
> The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away. The Lord will strike you with the boils of Egypt, and with tumors and scabs and itch, of which you cannot be healed. The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind, and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways. And you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to help you. You shall betroth a wife, but another man

> shall ravish her. You shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it. You shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not enjoy its fruit. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat any of it. Your donkey shall be seized before your face, but shall not be restored to you. Your sheep shall be given to your enemies, but there shall be no one to help you. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and fail with longing for them all day long, but you shall be helpless. A nation that you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your ground and of all your labors, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

While there is obviously not a one-to-one correlation in every respect —mainly due to the fact that we don't live in walled cities or have siege warfare situations—the main aspects of this judgment in history are the same. They are the destructive effects of war:

- Destruction of life
- Destruction of property
- Spread of disease
- Destruction of the family
- Economic hardship, scarcity
- Political tyranny and oppression
- Triumph of rabid selfishness
- Low birth rates
- Enormous debt that remains for generations
- No reprieve from heaven (ratchet effect)

There is another saying among military men, again a paraphrase: "The army is not an insurance company. The purpose of the army is to kill people and blow up stuff."

The pagan ruler Sun Tzu, author of the classic *The Art of War*, wrote the famous dictum, "All warfare is based on decep

tion." Governments, you see, must continually lie to prosecute war: deceive the enemy for advantage, yes; but also lie to its own people about the need for war in the first place. They will lie about the cost of the war, the bloodiness of the war, the long-term plans for war, and the extent of war, and then they will add the promise, "Things will return to normal once the war's over." It's all, or nearly all, a continuous lie covering the face of the earth.

Sun Tzu continued on about the economic effects of war: "Where the army is, prices are high; when prices rise the wealth of the people is exhausted. When wealth is exhausted the peasantry will be afflicted with urgent exactions [taxes, provisions for the army]." The State must continue its wars, no matter the cost, the debt, the burden—and it will be a burden.

There you have it in a nutshell, from the most famous theoreticians of war in history, as well as biblical law: war is destruction, death, lies, and theft. There's a convenient summary of all this in Scripture: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

If you don't believe war is hell, then you don't understand the Bible. If you still want American imperialism and its wars after this, then you must think hell is the cure for the world's problems. You must think America is hell, and hell is salvation.

But Jesus finished that verse by saying this: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

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2. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 2nd Ed., 221ff. The work is now in an 11th Edition, 2011.
3. Recall also that God forbade David to number the people as a pretext to war, and David was later forbidden to build a house for God because the King had "shed blood" and "waged great wars" (2 Sam. 24; 2 Chron. 22:8; 28:3).
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19. Quoted in Salughter, 194.
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22. Quoted in Slaughter, 123.
23. Slaughter 198.
24. Slaughter, 198–199.
25. *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, 6:457.
26. Slaughter, 196.
27. See Washington's "Proclamation," August 7, 1794, in *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, 6:391, 393; and "Proclamation" September 25, 1794, *Works*, 6:443; cf. Hamilton to Washington, August 2, 1794, *Works*, 6:355; Hamilton's "Tully III," August 28, 1794, *Works*, 6:420; "Tully IV," Sept. 2, 1794, *Works*, 6:425.
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three

steps to liberty

How can we restore the freedoms we once had, long ago, in the areas of war and the military? It starts with changing our personal views from the celebration of aggression, destruction, death, and *hell,* to the celebration of freedom and life—and not just life, but as Jesus put it, life "abundantly." It proceeds to personal commitments, actions, spreading the word, and then a larger agenda. Let's discuss these steps.

First, we need a radical change of mind. I hope the foregoing lessons on the biblical principles and the innumerable infractions of them in American history will help begin that change. It will be quite easy for some: the Bible says it; that settles it. Many such people may have never even read the relevant passages or considered their modern applications, but immediately upon understanding them, faithful Christians will simply embrace Scriptural truth. For others, however, different types of impediments will hinder this mental and spiritual process. For some, loyalty to a particular imperial political tradition—whether "strong Hamiltonian Federalism," or Unionism, or Republican Progressivism, Expansionism, or Wilsonian, Leftist Progressivism—will create a barrier to embracing freedom in the military. People accustomed to spreading their values by the use of force, theft, destruction, and murder will find it difficult to adjust to a peaceful mission.

Christian missions secularized

The concept of *missions* is a real spiritual issue at the heart of the modern war problem: what form shall missions take? *All* of the coercive measures mentioned above are simply secularized versions of the Christian great

commission. Whether under the guise of spreading civilization, education, protecting citizens from themselves, serving the expansion of transportation and commerce, purging the land of dangerous savages, saving the Union, modernizing the world, making the world safe for democracy, or fighting "treachery" or "terror"—in all cases, the use of government force to spread peace is a false version of the Christian mission. And in many cases, these "solutions" were devised by people operating explicitly out of traditions that had secularized the Christian message—Unitarians, humanists, social Darwinists, etc.

The classic expression of such secularization was the American abolitionist and terrorist John Brown, who put into action the belief of some Unitarian activists that it is acceptable to employ violence to bring about social change. Sure enough, Brown's intellectual and financial backing came from a group of six Unitarian clergymen called the "Secret Six."[1] But this was only one radical expression. The principle of threatening or forcing people into righteous behavior is the same whether it's John Brown murdering political rivals, Woodrow Wilson waging a war to make the world safe for democracy and to institute a League of Nations, or Horace Mann prescribing a compulsory State education mandate upon threat of fines or kidnapping. Each constitutes a mission to improve society, but each case replaces the Spirit-persuasion of the Gospel mission and the protections of liberty found in God's law with the "persuasion" of intimidation and physical coercion. The basis of the Great Commission—the influence of the Gospel, the move of the Spirit, the change of hearts, and discipleship—is completely blown out of the picture and replaced by the barrel of a gun.

This, of course, is the mode of secularistic and atheistic regimes historically. Most people have heard Mao Zedong's famous saying, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Most have not heard the thoughts which followed:

> Having guns, we can control Party organizations. . . . We can also create cadres, create schools, create culture, create mass movements. . . . All things grow out of the barrel of a gun. . . . Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army. Some people ridicule us as advocates of the "omnipotence of war." Yes, we are advocates of

> the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad, it is Marxist. . . . Only with guns can the whole world be transformed.[2]

Just as Wilson and his contemporaries, like H. G. Wells, believed they were fighting the "war to end all wars," Mao concluded, "We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun."

Likewise, Friedrich Engels was quite blunt in his essay "On Authority":

> A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire.[3]

But we must not make the mistake of thinking this principle applies to only radical leftists, revolutionaries, and communists; again, these are merely the *explicit* and *extreme* expressions of the principle of social change by violence—the logical conclusion of it, if you will. But the exact same principle underlies every attempt by man to transform man and society—even to advance the "common good"—through *coercive* means: compulsory state schooling, "sin" taxes, welfare schemes, drug wars, substance control laws, wealth redistribution, corporate welfare, public-private partnerships, government contracts, and thousands more. It's the same principle applied in many ways, and it has been applied in these ways from very early on in our history.

If American Christians, especially fundamentalists and evangelicals, are serious about the Bible and biblical freedom, they have got to end their love affair with America's standing army. It is unbiblical; it is outrageously, unbiblically expensive; and it is invasive, destructive, and deadly, most often not in pure defense. We have to stop the mentality that pronounces—as a popular country singer put it—"we'll put a boot in your ***, it's the American way." We have to stop applauding everything the military does as if it were automatically the gleam of national greatness, quit praising all

soldiers all the time as sacrosanct individuals, and quit forbidding any criticism of the military as if it were the holy of holies. It is simple: for many people, the use of force—deadly force—and the military that embodies that power are idols. And like David taking a census of the people for battle against God's will, we too often trust more in our nation's military capacities than in God. This has got to end if we are ever to see freedom in our country once again.

Bible prophecy

While for some the mental hurdle will be political loyalties, others cling to military might because of their view of Israel and the end times. I am not going to go into a full discussion of eschatology and foreign policy here except to say that this view is false. It takes a very special, recent, and convoluted view of Bible prophecy to derive the position that Christians today should specially favor the modern nation called "Israel" with foreign aid and military support, and help her against her Islamic neighbors. This view is most often supported by referring to the promise to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse" (Gen. 12:3). The most definitive work expressing this view is also the clearest: "Politically speaking, this statement is God's foreign policy to the Gentiles in their relationship with the Jewish people."[4]

This view is easily debunked (though not thoroughly debunked, which would take too much space here) by simply considering the biblical context: this promise was given to Abraham *before* he had *any* children. If we are to take just this verse at this point in Scripture—as so often is done—as the basis of blessing nations in relation to "Abraham," then we must apply it equally to *all* of Abraham's children. This includes Ishmael, the father of the Arab nations. This would mean of course that we should give just as much foreign and military aid to all of modern Israel's Arab neighbors! But this is absurd from a biblical viewpoint, as the definitive author above would agree. On what basis is it absurd? It is so because *later Scripture qualifies and narrows the definition of Abraham's seed.* Agreed.

But herein lies the rub: the means of qualifying who actually inherits the promise becomes the very means of *dis*qualifying modern-day Israel as well. The argument is that later Scripture qualifies the promise as not to Ishmael, but to Isaac, and then not to Esau, but to Jacob, who is later

renamed “Israel.” True enough. But this sets a precedent of narrowing that does not—as the proponents of this view would like you to believe—*stop* with Jacob. Paul himself uses this very method of argument in Romans 9 to prove that *Israel* also shall be redefined in light of Christ, “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel” (9:6). He concludes,

> What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” (Rom. 9:30–33)

In other words, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the seed of Abraham, is made up of the faithful, not the physical Jews per se. It is based on faith and not on bloodlines. Indeed, in the apostolic era, *most* Jews did not make it into the kingdom, and yet the resulting entity would still be called “Israel”—that is, the *new* Israel, the Church. Now it is clear why Jesus could tell the Jewish leadership of the day that they were not the seed of Abraham nor even children of God, but “You are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). For this very reason, He would put them on the cursed end of “God’s foreign policy.” Quoting the same prophecy of the stumbling stone as Paul did (Rom. 9:32–33; cf. Isa. 8:14–15; 1 Pet. 2:8), Jesus said to the Jews of His day,

> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him. (Matt. 21:43–44)

American Christians have simply got to get past the view that there is something special about the ethno-political entity established in the land of Israel in 1948. This is a huge mental hurdle for many Christians, but it is also an enormous theological delusion that leads so many to continue promoting an unbiblical view of war and the military, especially in regard to having a strong threatening presence in the Middle East.

A pro-life issue

Christians must also realize that the biblical perspective on the military and war correlates to pro-life issues. It doesn't make much sense to cry out against abortion while at the same time demanding our sons and daughters —and other people's children—be sent into unnecessary wars at the risk of their lives. This does not discount fighting in just wars when necessary, for these are wars to protect life against aggression. But the war-missions mentality is almost always contrary to this principle. The sad fact is, too many Christians who decry the government-protected slaughter of children in the womb are way too tolerant of government-mandated slaughter of kids at nineteen or twenty, not to mention the slaughter of thousands of civilian bystanders. A consistent pro-life view will avoid this terrible oversight.

Unnecessary war, along with abortion, is a modern form of human sacrifice, akin to the *Moloch* worship forbidden in Scripture (Lev. 18:21; 20:1–5; Deut. 12:29–32; 18:9–10; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; 17:17; Jer. 7:31–32). As I write in *God versus Socialism*,

> it should be obvious that if any war is waged unjustly, and troops are killed in that battle for an ungodly cause, then the *perpetrators of that war have offered human blood as an agent of social change*, rather than relying on godly principles. This is human sacrifice pure and simple. Christians should not be afraid to oppose war, to oppose it vigorously, and to oppose hasty wars especially.[5]

In fact, Christians ought to be leading the opposition to such wars by overwhelming numbers and with deafening cries.

Practical steps

What practical steps can individuals take toward the goal? Simple. *Don't join the current standing armed forces.* Don't join unless there is an invasion of our land or a biblical defensive cause which you deem worthy of fighting for. Thankfully, the one redeeming quality of our massive standing army is that enlistment is currently voluntary, at least at the point of joining. Once you join, of course, it becomes a binding contract, and that is important to remember. Once you report to basic training for the first

time, you are obligated to be enlisted for eight years, probably half of which will be active duty, and it is difficult to get out. While there is no current obligation to join, the vestiges of the old draft system remain in place just in case. Every male 18 to 25 years old must register with the "Selective Service System" so that the government has him on a list in case it needs to reinstate the draft. In its own words, the SSS exists to "provide our Nation with . . . the most prompt, efficient, and equitable draft possible, if the country should need it."[6] Failure to register (your duty by law) remains punishable as a felony including up to five years in prison and up to a quarter-million dollar fine.[7] In short, you cannot legally avoid military conscription in this country if the government demands that you fight, and in the mean time, the government continues like David to number its people for war. But at least for now, actual enlistment is voluntary. (And by the way, recruiters have been known to lie about benefits and much else to get young men to enlist.)

If you do decide to join a military force in the event of a just cause, you should consider your local state guards first, rather than immediately joining the National army. State defense forces are separate from the National Guard units that often bear the names of their States—these latter were completely nationalized in 2007 so that Governors no longer have any control over them. Nevertheless, many States have their own defense forces which serve various purposes. Extreme caution is needed here, however. Only some of these forces are armed; *some even go so far as to prohibit carrying weapons while in uniform!* This ironic twist on a "defense force" should ward off anyone who thinks, a la the Second Amendment, that the right to bear arms shall not be infringed. The regulations and goals differ from state to state, so research your own state and make informed decisions.

Further, don't support political candidates who have militaristic or imperial agendas. Don't support those who provoke unnecessary wars, call for huge defense spending, and military interventionism. This greatly narrows the field of viable candidates today, but it is the necessary view if biblical freedom is ever to prevail in this land again. Political choices arise to meet overwhelming demand. If we don't change our demands along with our attitudes, our political choices won't change; and if our political choices don't change, the tyranny will continue.

The first chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay, is often quoted by Christians in regard to the U.S. being a Christian nation and the need for

statesmen to be Christians. He is famously cited: “It is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.” This is all good and true, but rarely is this quotation given in its context. Jay was not speaking merely in general, but in the particular context of foreign policy, peace, and *war*. Here’s the context of his letter:

> It appears to me that the gospel not only recognizes the whole moral law, and extends and perfects our knowledge of it, but also enjoins on all mankind the observance of it. . . .
>
> It certainly is very desirable that a pacific disposition should prevail among all nations. The most effectual way of producing it is by extending the prevalence and influence of the gospel. *Real* Christians will abstain from violating the rights of others, and therefore will not provoke war.
>
> Almost all nations have peace or war at the will and pleasure of rulers whom they do not elect, and who are not always wise or virtuous. Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.[8]

We cannot, of course, fully endorse Jay’s politics, for he was squarely on the side of the Nationalists and the Constitution which got us into this military mess; but at least at this one point he had the doctrine correct. And ironically for its “pacific” tone, the letter was a reply to the issue of *pacifism*, which Jay adequately rebutted. In other words, even while promoting a doctrine of justifiable war, Jay nevertheless upholds the principles of individual rights, international peace, non-aggression, that missions should be based on the spread of the gospel, and that Christians should choose candidates who do not desire to provoke further wars. Christians should commit to these aspects of political theory.

This commitment must extend beyond our view of government: it should also apply to the entire military-industrial complex to a large degree. If you own a business, don’t contract with the military unless you are absolutely sure the military is not using the technology, products, or services you provide for the purposes of unjust wars. Perhaps there is room

here in some instances for pleas of ignorance, but certainly if you know for a fact that you are supplying unnecessary aggression, then there is moral culpability for the bloodshed and destruction on your part. It's a difficult decision, of course, when livelihood and lifestyles are at stake, but you at least have to ask the question of yourself. You should be more than willing to do so if you're a Christian. For consumers, try as much as possible to avoid patronizing companies that contribute to such wars.

Consider just for a moment the vast industry that has grown up around military aggression. If a company exists which manufactures, for example, guided missiles, that company makes profits only when it contracts with the government to sell those missiles. But what happens if the military stockpile reaches its capacity of missiles? No more orders come in. The company has no income, no future. Several people—maybe hundreds or thousands—who work for that company will face job loss and hardship. These are people with families, children in school, mortgages, and bills. Unless that company gets more orders for its bombs, it does not move forward and these people stand to lose everything. But unless the military actually *uses* its missiles, it does not need to order any new ones. Thus the company has a vital—perhaps desperate—economic incentive for the military to indeed fire missiles, and fire them continually, in order to maintain cash flow and the employment and lifestyles of its employees. This can mean only one thing: there are many economic incentives and motives driving America to go to war. And those profiting from the military-industrial complex are a significant example.

Now, consider that there are literally hundreds of such companies across this country. The Department of Defense writes new contracts daily, publishing only those larger than five million dollars. In 2010 alone, the Department contracted out over

300 billion dollars worth of contracts to private businesses. This means literally thousands—perhaps hundreds of thousands—of people are dependent upon revenue from the military.

The same moral culpability argument applies equally to those massive construction firms that share in rebuilding contracts after war has wreaked its havoc and a new city and State must be built from the rubble. If the war was unjust to begin with, being paid by the perpetrator to clean it up—while slightly more redeeming than aiding the destruction itself—is still wrong.

No doubt, it's important to have a strong defense system in place, but this can be accomplished effectively through biblical means without resorting to a standing army, drafts, or wars of aggression. If this were not the case, God would not have written His law the way He did. Our challenge today is 1) to look beyond the massively powerful army with which we are enamored and see it for the unbiblical system that it is, 2) have the conviction and courage to call it unbiblical even while it's unpopular to do so, 3) begin to make personal commitments that align with biblical values, and 4) begin to call and work for greater political change. With this, we must simultaneously develop a decentralized system for recruiting and training voluntary, biblical militias for genuine defense. We should do so beginning at the local level.

Churches could greatly strengthen both the convictions and efforts of individuals in this regard by simply teaching and preaching on the relevant passages and their implications as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Then, they should lead their people vehemently in prayer against all our enemies, including the ones in our own nation who would involve us in unnecessary wars. "Pray for peace." While it sounds like lame advice taken from the old hippie Jesus movement, it is actually a necessary and effective part of the advance of God's kingdom and the protection of freedom in the military. I recommend the following prayers, adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Reformed Episcopal Church:

For Our Country

> Almighty God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage, let us always be mindful of Your favor. Bless us with industry, prosperity, learning, and purity of life. Save us from discord and violence, and from pride and arrogance. Preserve us from public calamities, pestilence, and famine; from war, conspiracy, and rebellion; and especially from national sins and corruption. Defend our liberties, and give wisdom to those in authority so justice and peace may prevail. Make us strong and great in the fear of God, and in the love of righteousness, so that with Your blessing we may be a blessing to all people. In prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in trouble

do not let our trust in You fail. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the Armed Forces of Our Country

Almighty God, the refuge and fortress of Your people, we ask that You bless and protect all those who serve in the defense of our country, upon land, and on the water, and in the air. Ever spare them from being ordered into a war of aggression or oppression. Use them, if need be, as Your instruments, in the defense of our life and liberty. But restrain the greed and wrath of man that wars may cease in all the earth. Deepen in the hearts of our defenders the spirit of peace; and, for His sake, may they ever love and serve the Prince of Peace, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

For the Coming of Christ's Kingdom and Universal Peace

Almighty Father, we pray that You would hasten the coming upon earth of the kingdom of Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and draw the whole world of mankind into willing obedience to His blessed reign. Overcome all His enemies, and bring low every power that is exalted against Him. Cast out all the evil things which cause wars and strife among us, and let Your Spirit rule the hearts of men in righteousness and love. Repair the desolations of former days; rejoice the wilderness with beauty; and make glad the city with Your law. Establish every work that is founded on truth and equity, and fulfill all the good hopes and desires of Your people. Manifest Your will in the brotherhood of man, and bring in universal peace; through the victory of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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1. See Otto Scott, *The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement* (New York: New York Times Books, 1979).
2. "Problems of War and Strategy," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* [Zedong], Volume II (Peking [Beijing]: Foreign Language Press, 1967), 224–225.
3. Friedrich Engels, "On Authority," *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, ed. by Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1959), 485.
4. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 838.
5. Joel McDurmon, *God versus Socialism: A Biblical Critique of the New Social Gospel* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, 2009), 24.
6. www.sss.gov/what.htm (accessed January 3, 2012).
7. www.sss.gov/FSinternet.htm (accessed January 3, 2012).
8. John Jay to John Murray, October 12, 1816, *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay: vol. IV, 1794–1826*, ed. Henry P. Johnston (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1893), 391, 392–393.